MATTHEW

An Emmaus Correspondence Course

EMMAUS

Additional Studies Available for You!

We are sure that you will enjoy studying this course.

On-campus instruction in Dubuque, Iowa would add a new dimension to your pursuit of Biblical knowledge.

Come study with us.

Emmaus Bible College
2570 Asbury Road
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

BIBLE COLLEGE

Library of Tim Servati
Donated by Pat Corliss from the library
of her brother-in-law and minister,
Charles Sumner

MATTHEW

Original text material by C. Ernest Tatham
Developed by Emmaus Correspondence School
which is an extension ministry of
Emmaus Bible College
founded in 1941.

ISBN 0-940293-02-1

56789/0987

© 1966, 1972 Emmaus Bible College

All rights in this course are reserved. No part of this course may be reproduced in any manner including photo copy without written permission. Permission is not needed for brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Printed in United States of America

Instructions to Students

What this world needs is a King–one who will rule it with an iron hand, yet one whose heart is compassionate and kind and whose wisdom is complete. Such a King is what God has in mind for this world. His name is Jesus.

When He came to earth He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. His kingdom today is over the minds and hearts and souls of men, not over river, sea and shore. But He's coming back, and when He does the glowing predictions of the prophets will be fulfilled. He will reign over all the earth.

Matthew knew this King and knew Him well. His Gospel never loses sight of the fact that Jesus is great David's greater Son, rightful heir to David's throne and this world's needed King. As you study this Gospel the drama will all unfold. You will enjoy this study for the Gospel author evidently loves the King and looks forward to the day when "Jesus shall reign." Our hope is that this passion and this prospect will grip your heart as well.

LESSONS YOU WILL STUDY

1. The Preparation of the King (Matthew 1, 2)
2. The Presenting and Proving of the King (Matthew 3, 4)
3. The Principles of the King (Matthew 5-7)
4. The Powers of the King (Matthew 8, 9)
5. The King Proclaimed and Persecuted (Matthew 10-12)
6. The Rejected King (Matthew 13, 14)
7. The Kingdom, the Church and the Glory (Matthew 15-17)
8. The Personnel of the Kingdom (Matthew 18, 19)
9. The Predictions of the King (Matthew 20-22)
10. More Predictions of the King (Matthew 23-25)
11. The Arrest and Trial of the King (Matthew 26)
12. The Death and Resurrection of the King (Matthew 27, 28)

HOW TO STUDY

Begin by asking God to open your heart to receive the truths He would teach you from His Word. Read the lesson through at least twice, once to get the general drift of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up all Scripture references and examining all footnotes.

EXAMS

Each exam covers two lessons. (Exam 1, for example, covers lessons 1 and 2.) Each exam is clearly marked to show you which questions deal with which lesson. You may take the exam in two stages. When you have completed lesson 1, you may take the part of Exam 1 dealing with that lesson. Do not mail the exam to the School, however, until you have completed lesson 2 and taken the second part of the exam. *NEVER SEND IN AN EXAM FOR CORRECTION UNTIL BOTH PARTS ARE COMPLETED.* Send in an exam for correction as soon as you have completed all of it.

You may use any version of the Bible for general study. When answering exam questions, however, restrict yourself to either the *Authorized (King James) Version* (1611), or the *New American Standard Version.* These are two widely used versions. There are so many versions today that your instructor cannot possibly check them all in evaluating your work.

1. Thought and Research Questions

Some exams contain questions designed to make you do original Bible study. You may use your Bible to answer these questions. They are clearly marked.

2. What Do You Say? Questions

Questions headed in this way are optional and no point value is assigned to them. You may freely state your own opinions in

answer to such questions. Your candid answers will help your instructor get to know you better as an individual. They will also help us evaluate the general effectiveness of this course.

3. How Your Papers Are Graded

Any incorrectly answered questions will be marked by your instructor. You will be referred back to the place in the Bible or the textbook where the correct answer is to be found.

GROUP ENROLLMENTS

If you are enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Begin studying immediately, or, if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. Try to keep a regular study schedule. Endeavor to complete one lesson each week and one exam every two weeks. This will enable you to complete the course in three months. You may prefer to complete an exam each week and the course in six weeks. However, you will be allowed a maximum of one year to complete this course from the time of enrollment.

Lesson One

The Preparation of the King

(MATTHEW 1, 2)

INTRODUCTION

1. Let's Meet Matthew

Matthew-Levi, the son of Alphaeus, was a publican, or tax-gatherer. His name means, "Gift of Jehovah," and his home town was Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee. At that period his people, the Jews, were under the bondage of the Roman government. The legions of that Empire were everywhere throughout Palestine, and the Roman eagles and the booths of the tax collectors were ever present grim reminders of their political subjection. Any Jew who accepted the post of a publican was regarded with suspicion by his compatriots, for it made him appear most unpatriotic. In fact, the publicans were usually associated with sinners in the New Testament, and hence, were a despised class.

Matthew-Levi was not exactly a poor man, for we read of "his house" and the great feast that he prepared there (Mark 2: 14, 15). Though an apostle (Matthew 10:3), Matthew was humble. He alone refers to himself as "Matthew the publican." Had he been of an arrogant disposition he would have omitted this uncomplimentary description. Furthermore, when he tells the story of the feast which followed his conversion, he simply says that it was held in "the house," without telling us *whose* house. But both Mark 2:15 and Luke 5:29 inform us that this was held in

Matthew's own house, and Luke adds that it was a *"great* feast." Matthew's modesty causes him to omit these details.

There are three great factors that are closely associated with the conversion of this Evangelist. There is a *forsaking*, a *following*, and a *feasting*. And these all flow out of the simple word from the Savior, "Follow Me" (Luke 5:27; Matthew 9:9, 10).

The last glimpse that we have of Matthew is in the upper room in Jerusalem where he is bowing before his Lord in prayer (Acts 1:13).

2. What Does He Write About?

"The Holy Spirit is not a Reporter, but an Editor." It is important to realize this as we study the four Gospels, for it is very obvious to even the causal reader that each one of them is distinctive, and presents the Lord Jesus Christ from a distinctive point of view. Matthew is led of the Holy Spirit to present those features of the Lord's life that emphasize His royalty. Bearing in mind the particular needs of his fellow Jews, he emphasizes that Jesus is both King and Messiah of Israel. Thus the subject of this Gospel is God's King and His Kingdom. The term, "The Kingdom of Heaven," is peculiar to this Book and occurs 32 times in all. It is an expression that dates back to Daniel.

The word "multitude" is common in Matthew. It is befitting a king that he should address himself to large audiences. This contrasts with John, which is the Gospel of individual interviews, in large measure.

"That it might be fulfilled," another frequently used clause, ties Matthew very closely to the Old Testament. The Evangelist demonstrates that Jesus of Nazareth is the long-promised Messiah-King predicted by Israel's prophets, the One on whom the Old Testament prophetic spotlight falls with fullest illumination. He uses about 100 quotations from the Old Testament. "To Him give all the prophets witness!"

Matthew's Gospel does not follow the chronological order. He writes topically. He includes in his chronicle facts and features

designed to emphasize the kingship of Jesus, while at the same time he omits matters that are superfluous to this theme.

WHAT ARE ITS VALUES TO ME?

Now while certain scriptures may not be addressed *to* us, nor written directly *about* us, yet they are all *for* us. This applies to Matthew's Gospel. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God . . . that the man of God may be perfect (mature), throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

The Gospel of Matthew identifies the Lord Jesus as the true Messiah of Israel, and as the King with all authority. He manifested His power over every evil which plagues mankind. He can, therefore, deliver me from my every foe! This Book demonstrates the grace of Christ to the Gentile as well as the Jew. Thus I learn that He is no respector of persons. He came to bring blessing to all. It provides insight into His great purposes for the Church, Israel and the nations. Matthew is preeminently the dispensational Gospel, and can be understood only in the light of the great distinctions which exist between the nation of Israel, the Christian Church and the great Gentile nations. The climax of this Book lies, of course, in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ who has taken care of all my sins by His death on the cross, and by His power and sufficiencies, as risen from the dead, can keep me day by day.

THE LORD'S ANCESTRY (1:1-17)

The opening verse of Matthew's Gospel introduces and identifies the Person who is the great controlling Theme. He is Jesus Christ, the Son of both David and Abraham. His genealogy marks Him as coming from David's royal line, therefore King; He also is the true Seed of Abraham, therefore the Blesser of all the nations.

Thus He is the King of the Jews and the Source of blessing to the Gentiles as well. This indicates the two great streams of this Gospel–

streams that do not flow parallel, but rather out of one another. The first meets the dam of unbelief and its flow stops. But then it mounts and mounts until it bursts over the spillway and floods down to the parched plains of the heathen below.

The genealogy divides into three segments of fourteen generations each (v. 17). Joseph's lineage is traced down from Abraham through David's son, Solomon. But every intelligent Jewish reader would recall that a severe curse forbade any son of David through Solomon's line, after Jechoniah, to ascend the throne (Jeremiah 22:30). This did not mean that the legal title was nullified, but rather that no actual son of David via Solomon and Coniah (Jeconiah) could assume kingship.

Now, Joseph was of *this* line. Had Jesus Christ been his natural son He could never have been king, for though a royal descendant, the curse on Coniah's posterity had set up a legal road-block that completely stopped all traffic. He possessed a title which was worthless to Him personally had He been a son of that king by natural generation.

However, Jesus was the *legal* son of Joseph, but in order to reign on David's throne He must needs be an actual son of Israel's celebrated king. How could such be?

The solution is very simple. Joseph, the royal descendant of Abraham through Solomon, married Mary, another of David's descendants but through Nathan (see Luke 3:23-38). Nathan was a brother of Solomon, and his line, though conveying no title to the throne, was nevertheless David's line. Mary became the actual mother of Jesus, and her Child the product of miraculous conception. So Jesus Christ was the actual son of Mary, who was of David's line, and the legal son of Joseph who was also of the seed of David (v. 20), and of the royal pedigree. Joseph thus passed on to his adopted Son the title which was worthless to himself personally. This Son could claim the throne and possess it altogether apart from the taint of the cursed Coniah.

What an illustration this is of the sovereign wisdom of our God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!

The Holy Spirit includes the names of four women in this genealogy. (In fact, women stand at the beginning and the end of Matthew see chapter 28). These four are Tamar (v. 3), Rahab (v. 5), Ruth (v. 5) and Bathsheba ("her that had been the wife of Urias"—v. 6). Three at

least were Gentiles, and two of these—Rahab and Ruth—were Canaanites who, of course, were under the divine curse. Each of these four had a stain against her life and three of them certainly were not pure examples of moral virtue, as we might expect. The dark story of Tamar is found in Genesis 38; Rahab was a harlot (Joshua 6:25; Hebrews 11:31), while Bathsheba was involved with David in his great sin (2 Samuel 11). Even Ruth as a Moabitess was excluded by law (Deuteronomy 23:3).

By bringing Gentiles into the Lord's genealogy God would remind us that His Son has come to bring rich blessing to *all* nations as son of Abraham. By bringing in defiled Gentiles, He proclaims that Christ Jesus is coming into the world to save sinners.

THE MIRACLE BIRTH (1:18-25)

Having identified Joseph as a lineal descendant of David, Matthew next tells of his relation to Jesus. During his engagement to Mary he discovered that she was an expectant mother. Now the Law of Moses permitted divorce under such circumstances, and Joseph determined to break off his engagement without stating the real cause. He was a righteous man, but because of the love he had for Mary he would prevent any accompanying scandal. This was no hasty decision; "he thought on these things" (v. 20). And as he considered the emotion-charged complication which had arisen, an angel communicated to him God's solution.

He is told that his betrothed wife is the honored vessel through whom the long-promised Seed is to be born. Her Child is the result of the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. Her Son is to bear the name Jesus, "Jehovah-Savior," a name which is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "Joshua." Both the Person and the work of the true Messiah are inherent in this name. He is Jehovah. This is His person. But He is to save. This is His work (v. 21).

With verse twenty-two begins the use of the expression, "That it might be fulfilled." Seven centuries prior to this God had spoken through Isaiah concerning a unique son of a virgin, and while there was a partial and shadowy fulfillment of this in Isaiah's own family, yet

the complete realization is found only here. The virgin's son is to be Emmanuel, "God with us" (vv. 22, 23).

Thus we see that this Jesus is both Man and God. Being born of a human mother He is true man, possessing every faculty belonging to humanity, apart from any taint of sin (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:5; 1 Peter 2:22). But He is also "God with us"! "He never ceased to be what He was by reason of what He became."

Upon receiving this revelation Joseph acted. He was both thoughtful (v. 20) and obedient (v. 24). In him combine the qualities of humility, prudence and obedience. Thus he is a fit vessel for the divine use. How carefully the birth of the holy Baby was guarded from any possible taint of suspicion of evil (v. 25). Upon His birth Joseph names Him. He is *Jesus!*

THE COMING OF THE WISE MEN (2:1-12)

1. Who Were They?

Scripture provides no information concerning the exact background of these men. It is probable they were observers of the heavens, diligent students of nature, and distinct from their polytheistic fellow-Gentiles in that they were devout monotheists. These Magi (this Greek word simply means "Wise Men") may have been descendants of the astrologers who formed part of the advisory body with which oriental kings surrounded themselves in ancient times (Daniel 1:4, 20; 2:2). They may have been the custodians of some of Balaam's prophecies, one of which speaks of a Star which should come out of Jacob and of a Sceptre to arise out of Israel (Numbers 24:17). Possibly, tradition identified this "star" with the appearance of the Deliverer, while the very word "sceptre" suggested a king and his kingdom. And we learn from Luke (3:15) that there was general expectation of the nearness of the fulfillment of the Messianic promise.

These Wise Men, therefore, were devout Gentiles, believers in the true God, and heirs of at least some fragments of divine revelation. To them God revealed a great truth through nature. And they

responded at once, bringing rich gifts, and traveling over scorching deserts to find the divine Object of their hearts. How such obedience and devotion rebuke our lukewarmness and apathy!

It is probable that the Star appeared about the time of the Lord's birth. It did not "lead" them; it blazed brilliantly in the heavens, and the Magi discerned its significance. They then journeyed. Naturally a Jewish king would be born in the Jewish capital—Jerusalem. On arrival, they inquired regarding "*the* King," not "our King." How significant of Israel's spiritual plight when their King's birth is announced to them by *Gentiles!*

2. Who Was Herod?

Herod the Great was given this title by the Roman Senate in B.C. 40. He was an Edomite descendant, and marked by cruelty and slaughter. He ordered, for example, the execution of many prominent men in Judea. They were to be killed immediately upon his own death in order to secure at least some genuine mourning at his funeral! And Augustus is supposed to have said that it was better to be Herod's swine than Herod's son.

Moved by his jealous hatred of the newborn King, Herod sent his executioners to Bethlehem to exterminate all the two-years-and-under male children. But by this rapacious act, Herod actually fulfilled two prophecies (vv. 13-18). Thus did God overrule, and make the wrath of man to praise Him.

In considering the Slaughter of the Innocents (v. 16), however, we must not conclude that this signifies a great massacre. The population of Bethlehem would probably not exceed some 2,000, and the male children under two years of age would be, perhaps, between twenty and thirty. But this does not mitigate Herod's sin. He would never hesitate to massacre ten times that number if it would satisfy his reckless ambition.

3. Who Were the Scribes?

These were the theologians of Judaism. They were well informed,

intellectually, in the Scriptures and were the official interpreters of the Law and the Traditions. Being for the most part Pharisees, they belonged to the orthodox wing in current religious affairs.

4. Where Did the Wise Men Worship?

It is contended by some that these Magi worshipped the Christ-Child in Nazareth rather than in Bethlehem. This is based on the statement of Luke 2:39 which, in itself, seems to confirm this view. However, our present chapter (Matthew 2) clearly states that the Scribes rightly pointed the inquiring Herod to Bethlehem as the King's birthplace, and it seems natural to assume that it was to this town they went. Moreover, it was here that the slaughter of the male-children was perpetrated (v. 16).

But what about Luke 2:39? We do not have to assume that the Family returned to Nazareth *immediately* following the Babe's presentation to the Lord in the Temple. This could be a general statement of fact allowing sufficient interval for the transpiry of the events concerning the visit of the Wise Men and the flight into Egypt. This would mean of course that Joseph and Mary established a residence of possibly a year or two in Bethlehem, and that they fled from this southern town to Egypt; and then on their return from thence they resumed their normal life in their old home-city of Nazareth. The statement of Luke 2:39 then is, of course, quite factual. But the events of Matthew 2 must be regarded as preceding it. This is not uncommon in Scripture.

5. Bethlehem—Egypt—Nazareth

There is a time-lapse between the opening verse of chapter 2 and the closing scenes of the previous one. The journey of the Wise Men must have taken at least several weeks, and the Babe had already been presented in the Temple. The original expression of verse one is, "Jesus having been born." In fact, Herod's execution of all the male children of Bethlehem from two years and under indicates that quite a period had occurred since the original

appearance of the Star.

Evidently this Star appeared to the Magi at the time of the Lord's birth, but did not necessarily *lead* them all the way to the capital city. Upon their arrival there, and having been further directed, the Star reappeared and directed them to Bethlehem (v. 9).

Seven centuries earlier Isaiah had predicted that Gentile worshippers would come from afar, attracted to Israel and her glorious Lord, and that among these delegates from the nations would be those bringing gold and incense (Isaiah 60:1-7). This scene is a true preview of this.

It is only natural to suppose that these oriental visitors would make for the capital, for there, surely, the new King would be born. Moreover, they would doubtless expect the city to be in the midst of great jubilation, joyously celebrating the royal event. How astonished and disappointed they must have been to find that the reigning sovereign—the Edomite Herod—reacted with apprehension at the announcement. He was troubled, and dark rumors were being circulated throughout the city (v. 3).

Calling upon the religious authorities for more accurate information, Herod learned that divine prophecy pointed to Bethlehem as Messiah's birthplace. Their quotation (v. 6) is a free rendering of Micah 5:2—a prediction, by the way, which indicates both the perfect humanity and deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. But though these Scribes could point to the very spot where the Deliverer should be born, they were too indifferent to travel the six short miles to Bethlehem to investigate whether or not the prophecy had been fulfilled!

In fact, there are three distinct reactions manifested here. There was apprehension on the part of Herod and his court, indifference on the part of the Scribes and worship as seen in the Wise Men. These three attitudes also mark men today.

In this narrative we have creation (the Star) and revelation (the Scriptures) both pointing to Christ. He is the Creator of the one and the Theme of the other. True science and the Bible always combine in their united witness to Him.

Herod's inquiry as to exactly when the Star appeared and his

suggestion that he too might come and worship would probably lead his subjects to believe that he shared their hopes and expectations (vv. 7, 8).

The reappearance of the Star led to *rejoicing* (vv. 9, 10), but the sight of the Child led to *worship* (v. 11). It is noteworthy that the Magi did not worship the Babe in the manger (as in Luke), but, rather, the "Child" in the "house." The popular Christmas pictures are quite misleading here.

There is no mention of Joseph in this worship-scene (v. 11). He was evidently absent. Furthermore, while Mary and the Child are present, the oriental visitors present their worship and gifts to *Him* only. Knees and hearts bow before Him who is God's King. The gifts are expressive of their adoration.

Gold has intrinsic worth (which paper money has not), and might suggest our Lord's essential deity and glory. *Frankincense* reminds us of the topping of the meal-offering (which was a picture of Christ's perfect humanity, Leviticus 2) which, being scraped off and all burned on the altar, suggests those perfections of His humanity which only God Himself could appreciate. The *myrrh* was always associated with death and embalmment, and would remind us that this Holy Child was eventually to die.

Their adoration over, and their mission accomplished, they returned to their own country by another route. And this new course was decided upon because of the divine warning that they were to ignore Herod's instructions (v. 12). Under normal circumstances we are to obey existing governmental authority. There are times, however, when to do so would make us disobedient to the authority of God (see Acts 4:17-20). We must submit to earthly authorities at all times, unless their demands contravene the plain command of God Most High.

THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT AND BACK (2:13-23)

Instructed of God through a dream, Joseph took Mary and the Child

to Egypt. No bodyguards surrounded the young King on this journey, and it is very likely that the gold presented Him by the Wise Men was used to defray the expenses involved. Worship to our Lord Jesus Christ should be expressed by the offering of our money, as well as our praise, and this money should be used to carry out His purposes.

The quotation, "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (v. 15), is from Hosea 11:1. Apart from the Holy Spirit, we never would have made an application of this passage to Christ. In its natural meaning, it harks back to Israel. The attractive charm of Israel's childhood, however, soon disappeared. But here is *another* Child–Jesus–whom Jehovah finds in Egypt, out of which country He calls Him, and who fails not. The love which rests upon Him as a child never fades for the slightest moment. This use of the Old Testament indicates something of the wide possibilities of Scripture application. We must always distinguish between the interpretation and application of Bible passages. The former is usually quite narrow; the latter, quite wide.

Matthew now turns his attention to the baleful vengeance of the enraged Herod against Bethlehem's male children (vv. 16-18).

The third Old Testament quotation in this chapter (v. 18) comes from Jeremiah 31:15. The primary setting of this text concerns the heartbreaking experience of the Jewish captives assembled at Ramah, a town north of Jerusalem in Benjamin's territory (Joshua 18:25), preparatory to their exile in Babylon (Jeremiah 40:1). Now, Rachel was Benjamin's mother and she is buried near Bethlehem (Genesis 35: 19). Jeremiah had pictured mother-Rachel as wailing out her laments because her children, the backslidden tribes of Benjamin and Judah, were being torn away by their Babylonian captors.

But Matthew makes a fresh application of this ancient lament. Rachel has fresh cause to weep. And this time the calamity is much nearer home; it is not in Ramah to the North, but right in Bethlehem. The bloody sword has not struck at adult backsliders but at innocent children! Hence, she weeps out her hopeless grief; she would not be comforted.

However, Jeremiah had passed on from God a word of real comfort. "Refrain thy voice from weeping," he had counseled, ". . . they shall come again from the land of the enemy" (Jeremiah 31:16). And

they *did* return to their own land seventy years later. The parallel is perfect. The mothers of Bethlehem could take comfort in the assurance that their slaughtered male children had not ultimately perished, but would be raised again, clothed in glorious immortality. Here is comfort for all of us who have lost children in death. Because of the Savior's cross they will live eternally.

Now Joseph has another significant dream (see 1:20; 2:13, 19, 22). An angel informs him of Herod's death, and instructs him to return to the land of Israel. But the legal heir of David's throne cannot yet be crowned, but must wait. In the meantime He must take His place as an outcast in a despised Galilean town (John 1:46). "He shall be called a Nazarene" is not any exact, definitive prophecy from the Old Testament, but is used by Matthew in a general way. The word "Nazareth" seems to be derived from a Hebrew root which signifies "sprout" or "shoot." It is the word used by the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 11:1 concerning the royal shoot that is to emerge from Jesse's stock. Jesus is this sprout. He the lowly Unknown, who spent almost thirty years of His life in this city. The word "Nazarene" thus suggests both lowliness and life.

When you have mastered this lesson, take the first part of Exam 1 (covering lesson 1), questions 1-10 on pages 2/13-14 (right after lesson 2). Remember, you will not turn this exam in for correction until after you have done lesson 2.

Lesson Two

The Presenting and Proving of the King

(MATTHEW 3, 4)

There is a long chronological gap between chapter 3 and chapter 2. Chapter 2 leaves our Lord as a Child in Nazareth; our present one opens with the preaching of John the Baptist and with our Lord's baptism at the age of thirty.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN (3:1-12)

"In those days" (v. 1) probably means that there had been no really noticeable change in the course of history since the childhood of Jesus; things had gone on rather uneventfully. But now a flaming prophet breaks in on the life of the sleeping nation! For the first time since Malachi—four hundred years before—God speaks and a voice of spiritual authority cries out.

John was born for the priesthood. But in a day of religious decadence a prophetic, rather than priestly, ministry is needed. He was therefore led of God to turn to the harsh ascetic life of the prophet. Clothed in severe garb and eating a rigid diet, he lived solitarily in the desert. He was a true Nazarite, and as such abstained from all wine throughout life. But this child of the solitudes was no mere mystic; he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth, and the Word of the Lord came to him in freshness and in power (Luke 1:5-25, 57-80; 3:2; Mark 1:7).

John burst upon the nation, half-expecting its Messiah, as a

meteor would flash across the heavens on a dark night.

Two voices ring out and they both concern the Christ–John's (vv. 1-12) and the Father's (vv. 13-17).

The preaching was as stern as the preacher. It called for repentance and reality. Israel's reliance on pedigree, tradition and past privilege was false and utterly worthless. Before John's sharp axe the great trees of Israelitish pride fell. Or, to change the metaphor, like a great bulldozer he levelled the hills and filled the valleys as he prepared a straight and level road for the King's approach.

"Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (v. 2). This refers not to heaven, of course, but to heaven's rule over the earth. It involves the manifestation of the true King and the recognition of His authority. The expression "King of heaven" (literally "the heavens") comes from Daniel (see chapter 7:27) and refers to the day of the Messiah's earthly glory and rule. John was not referring to the Christian Church. He had in mind the kingdom which all the Old Testament prophets had associated with the great day of Messiah's manifestation.

For the coming of this kingdom there must be a proper attitude. Hence his call to repentance. This demand ultimately was refused by Israel.

John fulfilled Isaiah's great prophecy of Isaiah 40:3-5 and Malachi 3:1. In each of these we have the word "prepare." This was the key: the Baptist was to serve as the porter (John 10:3), the messenger, the forerunner, to introduce Jesus to the nation. His mien was similar to Elijah's (2 Kings 1:8; see Zechariah 13:4) in whose "spirit and power" he had come (Luke 1:17).

"All Judaea" went out to him. This is an idiomatic expression indicating the masses of the populace (vv. 5, 6). These accepted John's baptism, confessing their sins and obeying the call to repent. In so doing they "justified God" (Luke 7:29).

The Pharisees and Sadducees formed the two leading religious parties in Judaism, the former being the orthodox, or ritualists, and the latter the liberal, or rationalists. On seeing the Pharisees and Sadducees approaching the River, John boldly called them the serpents' seed. Their repentance, he said, must be real (vv. 7, 8). Their prided pedigree was worthless (v. 9). Good fruit is the product of good root,

and if the latter is lacking then the axe and the fire would finish the tree (v. 10).

In verse 11 John speaks of two baptisms–his own and that of the King. His was that of water *unto* repentance; the King's that of the Holy Spirit and of fire. Some commentators feel that in this latter there is a sharp contrast: the baptism with the Spirit anticipates Pentecost and immersion into the Church, the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:13), while the fire refers to the dreadful alternative, "the everlasting burnings." This *may* be so.

However, it seems to be more in keeping with the context to conclude that verse 11 refers to one and the same experience. Notice that John did not say that Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Spirit *or* fire, but rather *"and"* fire. Furthermore, he is addressing those who have been baptized by him unto repentance and who have taken their place in judgment, confessing their sins. These are the "you" of his prediction, not merely the bystanders who were holding aloof. His means, or elements of baptism, was water and by this ceremony converts were introduced into the circle of the godly Israelitish remnant who were awaiting Messiah's manifestation. But the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire would introduce them to something far more wondrous–the Christian Church.

Fire is always suggestive of judgment. This judgment, however, is not always retributive in character; sometimes it is purgative. Malachi had spoken of fire in both senses. He spoke of Messiah's coming to Israel "like a refiner's fire" who would "refine" and "purify the sons of Levi" (Malachi 3:2, 3; see also Zechariah 13:9). He also spoke of the devouring fire of His anger (4:1). John used the term "fire" in both senses in Matthew 3:11, 12. In verse 11 he is thinking of it in the sense of Malachi 3:2; in verse 12 he is thinking of it in the sense of Malachi 4:1. The baptism of the Spirit and fire refers to Messiah's first coming; the gathering of the wheat and burning of the chaff anticipate His second coming.

The divided "tongues as of fire" that accompanied the baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:3) symbolized the burning and purifying ministry of the Christian Gospel which was to be preached to both Jew and Gentile. A few years after this God gave the believing Gentiles this

same experience, "purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8, 9).

Just as the first appearing of the King found a believing and prepared remnant amidst much unbelief and unreality, so at His second appearing will He find the same mixed condition. The wheat will be gathered into the garner, but the chaff will be consumed (v. 12). These metaphors are indicative of very solemn realities.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS (3:13-17)

Earth has witnessed to Jesus. Now we are about to hear heaven's testimony. Our Lord was now about thirty years of age (Luke 3:23), and ready to assume His public ministry after these years in Nazareth, the silence of which is almost entirely unbroken. Was God satisfied with that hidden life? We shall see.

The Lord's proposal that He be baptized startled John. He would have hindered Him and would have reversed both baptizer and candidate (v. 14). Thus John showed both his own discernment and his humility. "Suffer it now," replied Jesus, "for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (v. 15). What did He mean?

The penitents who underwent John's baptism "justified God" inasmuch as they acknowledged the righteousness of the sentence of death upon themselves (Luke 7:29). (The Jordan always suggests death.) Thus they expressed their repentance, and also their confidence in the Coming One, the Sin-bearing Lamb of God.

No sin, however, can be removed by a mere confession, much less by a ceremony. Its wages is death. And those wages *must* be paid if the demands of divine righteousness are to be satisfied. But who could meet such a demand? Only One! And this One was the only-begotten Son of God, the sinless Christ, who would make Himself responsible for the entire debt by going to the cross and dying, and thus fulfilling all righteousness. Our Lord's baptism in water was a pictorial preview of the baptism of judgment which He would experience about three and a half years later.

The Jewish sacrifices for sin under the law have been likened to the giving of a promisory note on the part of a borrower. Every sacrifice

was a renewal of the note. But when our Lord came and bowed in the river of death He *endorsed* the note, guaranteeing full payment. He discharged it completely on the cross!

The heavens were now opened (v. 16). This is significant, and should be considered in the light of Acts 7:56 and Revelation 19:11. In each case heaven is opened to reveal the glorious Lord Jesus—the first, to reveal a perfect Man on earth; the second, the same glorified Man in heaven; and the last to display the same Man returning to take His kingdom. Christianity is the revelation of the opened heavens.

Our Lord had been conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). But now He is anointed for power and service (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38). This experience stood on the threshold of the mighty public ministry which culminated in His death.

The Spirit descended in bodily shape and rested upon Him (v. 16). Noah's dove, which had found no rest for the sole of her foot (Genesis 8:9), suggests the thought that the Holy Spirit hovered for thousands of years over the sinful desolation of Adam's sons. But not one could He find upon whom He could rest with abiding satisfaction. But now He had found One. God had revealed to John that the One on whom he should see the Spirit descending *and remaining* must be recognized as the Son of God (John 1:33). At long last the holy Dove had found the One upon Whom He could abide.

Then the Father speaks and acclaims Jesus as His beloved Son (v. 17). He has found His every delight in Him. Thus the eternal trinity is manifested, and the focus of all heavenly and earthly interest centers on the glorious Man, Christ Jesus, the unique Son of God.

THE TESTING OF THE KING (4:1-11)

Here we have a most amazing scene—a fallen angel attacks an unfallen Man. Such a Man Satan has never encountered before. All the others were fallen sons of Adam and victims to his wiles. But this was "the *Second* Man," the last Adam, and the contest issued in a decisive defeat for the Devil and in a glorious demonstration of the absolute holiness of Jesus.

Let us look at the purpose, the period and the proving.

1. The Purpose of the Temptation

Satan wanted to achieve the fall of this One just announced as Messiah and Son of God. God's purpose was to allow Satan to attack and openly demonstrate that Jesus, His unique Son, was impeccable. Thus we read that Christ was "led" (Matthew 4:1; Luke 4:1) and even "driven" by the Spirit (Mark 1:12) into this experience.

This was no sham-battle. It was a very real conflict. "He suffered being tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). The very suggestions made to Him, the sinless Son, caused grief of spirit. Imagine someone suggesting to an honest and devoted son that he increase his own assets by robbing his mother. Or imagine suggesting to a devoted husband and father that he abandon his wife and children. The mere suggestion would be repugnant. This faintly illustrates how the Lord felt about Satan's suggestions.

The idea expressed by Satan to Jesus that He take Himself out of the hands of God and act independently, or that He might have the crown without the cross and thus short-cut the plan of the Godhead must have caused acute grief. His suffering of spirit was very real.

The question arises, of course, as to whether He *could* have fallen. Could our Lord have sinned? Emphatically not! He was sinlessly perfect, God's unique Son. If He could have fallen, then the whole matter of our redemption hung in the balance until the cross and resurrection. Moreover, if He could sin while here, what assurance do we have that He cannot sin *today?* Paul, John and Peter combine to give three positive New Testament statements regarding the sinlessness of Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:5; 1 Peter 2:22).

What, then, is the value of the Temptation? It is simply this. God has publicly demonstrated the perfection of the Man, Christ Jesus. The temptation was designed, not to determine if He could sin, but to demonstrate that He could not! Just as gold is subjected

to the acid and the scales to demonstrate its purity, so the "holy, harmless and undefiled" One was tested by Satan. Adam was innocent but He was holy. Adam's innocence was like a blank white sheet of paper which Satan soon befouled. But the Lord Jesus was like a sheet filled with *God;* Satan could not put a mark on it.

2. The Period

The onslaught lasted for forty days. We recall the forty days of Moses (Exodus 34:28) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:8). These, however, fasted that they might meet God. Jesus fasted to meet Satan! At the end of this period He was famished and weakened. God might be thought to have abandoned the very One He has called His beloved Son, leaving Him to starve in the desert.

3. The Proving

Notice the apparent innocence of the first temptation, the Scripturalness of the second, and the reasonableness of the third.

"If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (v. 3). Surely there is nothing sinful in being hungry; nor in eating bread to satisfy that hunger. And to perform a miracle to meet His need would surely be innocent enough, if Son of God He were!

But our Lord did not use His divine prerogative to meet His need. He had not come to command, but to obey. As *man* He would not act independently, but would wait on His Father's word. The human body may be nourished by bread, but Man is not all body. If man would really live he must be nourished by God's Word. Christ, therefore, overcame by the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. His quotation of Scripture (v. 4; Deuteronomy 8:3) illustrates the Psalmist's word, "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" (Psalm 17:4).

The second temptation was different. If Jesus would not

move without the Word, then surely He would be moved by it. Hence, Satan quoted Scripture, and while it is true that he misquoted it by omitting three words found in the original of Psalm 91:11 ("in all thy ways"), the real subtlety lay in the misapplication of the passage.

To cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple before the astonished gaze of the masses would not only have been quite safe for the Lord in the light of the prophetic promise, but it would immediately have brought the nation to His feet. Surely this was His opportunity! The people were looking for a wonder-working hero, and He could well fulfill the role. The angel bodyguard would help complete the picture.

But our Lord recognized that such a downward leap, and under such circumstances, would not be an act of faith, but an act of presumption. Hence, He quoted the inspired prohibition, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

The third temptation was the climax and exposed the Devil's supreme ambition—to be the object of worship. In some manner which Scripture does not explain, Satan took our Lord to an exceeding high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in a moment of time (compare Luke 4:5). He claimed all these, and Christ did not deny that claim. Originally these kingdoms and this glory were given to Adam; but Satan, by wresting this from Adam, had become "the prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Ephesians 2:2; 6:12, etc.). Satan seems to have been asserting the truth here, and was making a tremendous offer to our Lord. All world-kingdoms, their peoples and glory could be His. There need be no cross. All of its suffering could be bypassed, and the glittering crown was within His grasp. But the price was high—"Fall down and worship me" (v. 9).

What a preposterous insult! A rebel-spirit, the arch conspirator in a great insurrection against the authority and glory of God, asked his sinless Creator to bow down and worship him! Could anything be more blasphemous? Once again the Lord Jesus drew forth the Sword of the Spirit and felled the evil one with a single thrust. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt

thou serve" (v. 10). The Creator, and the Creator alone, must have worshipful allegiance.

This ended the onslaught; "The devil leaveth Him," we read, "and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him." The vanquished fallen angel fled and unfallen angels came in his place adoringly to minister to their Creator-Lord. The Enemy's aim was the fall of Jesus. He sought to add Him, as his greatest prize, to his world of captives.

Satan's methods are varied, and we need to be on our guard constantly lest we be caught by them. First Satan tempts us to act independently of God, to take things into our own hands, to act in our own behalf. Then he misapplies the Scriptures. Passages which have their true application to the saints are applied to the unregenerate. Scriptures are wrested from their setting and given a false application, and because they *are* Scripture, the unwary are deceived and misled. The Devil is never more subtle than when he comes to us with a Bible under his arm!

Finally he plays up self-advantage, the avoidance of the painful path of suffering down which God would lead us toward the final goal. The proud and luxury-loving Corinthians were guilty of this very thing, and rightly received the apostolic rebuke (1 Corinthians 4:8-16).

THE TESTIMONY OF THE KING (4:12-25)

There is a time-break between our last section and this. Between verses 11 and 12 comes the first three chapters of John's Gospel. There we learn that the Lord had already become acquainted with Andrew, Peter and the others in the Jerusalem area *before* John the Baptist had been cast into prison (see John 3:24). These men, therefore, had already believed that Jesus was Messiah and King, and had already given Him their hearts' allegiance. Some months, however, have elapsed, and they have returned to Galilee to their old occupations.

According to verse 12 John the Baptist's imprisonment marked the beginning of the Lord's public ministry to the nation. He made no

attempt to rescue John from Herod's prison, but began instead to liberate those who were moral and spiritual captives—a more bitter bondage indeed. Having bound Satan, "the strong man," he proceeded to "spoil his goods." He now left his boyhood home of Nazareth and came to Capernaum, a coastal town on the Sea of Galilee which became the hub of those of His activities which are recorded in this Gospel. Matthew saw in this a fulfillment of a prophecy of Isaiah 9:1, 2. Originally the territory referred to belonged to two of Israel's tribes, but it had become overrun by the Gentiles. Thus Israel had lost not only her land, but also her separate character and had sunk into a very low spiritual condition as a result. But now the Messiah had come and "the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light sprang up."

In verse 17 Jesus Christ embarked on His public ministry. He "begins" to preach. He assumed the role of Israel's Messiah and the role of the great Prophet of God, fulfilling the prediction of Moses, found in Deuteronomy 18:18 and 19. And note too He took up the exact message of John the Baptist, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (compare 3:2).

Just what did our Lord mean by "the Kingdom of Heaven" (or "Heavens" as it literally is)? The roots of this concept are found in the Old Testament. Daniel tells us "the Heavens do rule" (Daniel 4:25, 26). He, with all the other prophets, foresaw a time when Heaven's authority, centered in Israel's King-Messiah, would be recognized on the earth. Jerusalem would be its capital, and Israel its first citizens. As Son of David, Christ would sit upon His throne and administer righteousness and peace to the ends of the earth. Thus, through Israel blessing would flow to all the Gentile nations, and all earth's peoples bow to the supreme authority of its King. The earth also would be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 2:1-4; 4:2-6; 11; 12; Psalm 72; Jeremiah 33:15, 16; Daniel 7:13, 14).

When the Lord proclaimed "The Kingdom" to Israel He did so in the light of what these Old Testament prophets had said. But the Kingdom of Heaven had not only its political aspects, it had its moral and spiritual aspects too. When Jesus came to Israel He found the nation full

of religious ceremonialism and empty profession. Apart from a weak but godly minority, all was religious sham. There could be no kingdom without a thorough-going self-judgment and so both John and the Lord emphasized the need for repentance. Our Lord was not offering a kingdom of joy and peace to a carnal people. His kingdom must be based only on a foundation of righteousness. Matthew tells how Israel repudiated her King and with Him the kingdom. Instead of a crown, they gave Him a cross. Since that time the Lord has been in heavenly glory on His *Father's* throne, rather than on His own (Revelation 3:21). Israel's Messianic kingdom has been deferred until He returns to earth and as the Prophets indicate it will be only through a godly Israelitish remnant that the King, as the Son of Abraham, will bring blessing to all mankind.

1. The King Recruits His First Disciples (4:18-22)

But how would the King introduce this Kingdom of the Heavens? Would He mobilize an army and establish it by force? Already there had been signs that opposition lay ahead. While He had not yet been *officially* rejected, Jerusalem had already been disturbed by His birth. A flight into Egypt had already been necessary (chapter 2). Because His kingdom must be one of righteousness, based on moral and spiritual principles, He would gather to Himself men who had the necessary moral qualities. His followers must reflect the virtues of the King. Hence He walked by the Sea of Galilee with Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John. He did not have in mind a mere carnal or political order of things or He would have rallied to His standard men of political and religious distinction—the best equipped sons of the nation. On the contrary Jesus chose ordinary men, of modest position, of lowly and subject hearts. He chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and things which are despised, that no flesh should glory in His presence (see 1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

Probably six months previous to this incident the Lord had revealed Himself to Peter, Andrew, James and John. John records

the details of this (John 1:35-42). These men had already come to know Christ as Savior; now they submitted to Him as Lord. And note—they were called to follow Him when they were busy. He never calls lazy men into His service! Notice also their prompt obedience. "They *straightway* left their nets, and followed Him." This is twice repeated (vv. 20, 22). His call always demands immediate obedience. Thus, these four entered upon their apprenticeship under the very best of teachers.

2. The First Galilean Tour (4:23-25)

Matthew condenses in these few verses our Lord's first great preaching tour among the Jewish synagogues of the northern province. He preached the gospel of the kingdom, and healed every form of disease. No case was too chronic or hopeless for Him. He thus presented Himself to Israel as Jehovah "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases." This should have identified Him to Israel as the Fulfiller of the 103rd Psalm but sin had clouded their minds and blinded their eyes.

The gospel of the kingdom and physical miracles are linked together (compare 9:35). This Good News simply announced to Israel that the true King was in the midst, having all grace and all power and ready to receive their allegiance in accordance with Old Testament prophecy. For a time at least it appeared this might be realized, for great throngs from all parts eagerly followed Him. But this popularity soon proved itself a mere emotional wave.

When you are ready, complete Exam 1 by answering questions 11-20 on pages 2/15-17. (You should have already answered questions 1-10 as part of your study of lesson 1.)

When you have answered all the questions in Exam 1, mail the exam for correction.

Name _____ Exam Grade _____
(print plainly)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Class Number _____

Instructor _____

LESSON 1

In the blank space in the right-hand margin write the letter of the correct answer.

1. Matthew was
a. a Roman citizen
b. a Jewish tax-collector for Rome
c. a citizen of Cana of Galilee
d. half Roman and half Jewish

b

2. Matthew's Gospel particularly emphasizes Jesus as
a. Son of God
b. Son of Man
c. Sovereign
d. Servant

d

3. Which of the following phrases is most characteristic of Matthew's Gospel?
a. "that it might be fulfilled"
b. "and God spake all these words"
c. "thou shalt remember"
d. "and thou shalt be blessed"

a

4. The Lord's genealogy in Matthew
a. is identical to that in Luke
b. traces the Lord's descent through Solomon to Joseph
c. traces the Lord's descent through Nathan to Mary
d. is null and void because it contains the names of women

c

5. The name "Jesus" means
a. "my God is King"
b. "exalted Son"
c. "Jehovah the Savior"
d. "son of my right hand"

c

6. The Herod to whom the wise men came is known as
a. Herod the Great
b. Herod Antipas
c. Herod Agrippa
d. Herod the Tetrarch

a

7. The wise men visited the Lord Jesus
a. at the same time as the Shepherds
b. on Christmas day
c. in the stable
d. in a house in Bethlehem

d

8. The wise men gave their gifts
a. to Mary
b. to the child Jesus only
c. to Joseph
d. to all three of the above

b

9. The slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem was a fulfillment of an ancient prophecy made by
a. Isaiah
b. Jeremiah
c. Ezekiel
d. Moses

b

10. Joseph took the child Jesus to
a. Nazareth because it was the second most important city in Palestine
b. Nazareth in fulfillment of a somewhat general Old Testament prediction about "a Nazarene"
c. Nazareth because he wanted to fulfill Jeremiah 31:16
d. Capernaum because being in Gentile territory he thought Jesus would be safe there from Herod

b

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What impresses you most about the birth of the Lord Jesus as recorded by Matthew 2?

The way God moves in the life of all concerned pertaining to the announcement of His birth and those who had a part in His early life

LESSON 2

In the blank space in the right-hand margin write the letter of the correct answer.

11. Which of the following best describes John the Baptist? He
a. was born into the Hebrew royal family
b. was destined by birth for the priesthood
c. came from a family line which had given to Israel all her most famous prophets
d. was qualified by birth to be a prophet, priest and king — b

12. The keynote in John's preaching can be summed up in the word
a. repent
b. believe
c. rejoice
d. weep — a

13. When the Lord asked John to baptize him, John the Baptist was
a. very gratified by the honor
b. startled by the request
c. marked for death by the Pharisees
d. eager to make such a notable contribution to the Lord's career — b

14. Present at the Lord's baptism were
a. all the members of the Trinity
b. all the leaders of Israel
c. all the members of the Lord's family
d. all the great ones of the earth

a

15. The onslaught of Satan in the temptation of the Lord Jesus
a. was short and sharp, lasting a maximum of three days and three nights
b. lasted over a period of forty days
c. was designed to see whether or not the Lord Jesus would fall when tempted
d. was really a sham battle since the Lord did not suffer during the temptation

b

16. The second temptation was that the Lord
a. cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple
b. turn stones into bread
c. turn water into wine
d. worship Satan in exchange for world dominion

a

17. Between Matthew 4:11 and 4:12 must be inserted
a. the Sermon on the Mount
b. the last six verses of Luke 15
c. the first three chapters of John
d. the feeding of the five thousand

c

18. The Lord's public ministry began with the words
a. "lo I come to do Thy will, O God"
b. "repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"
c. "flee from the wrath to come"
d. "behold the Bridegroom cometh"

b

19. The "Kingdom of Heaven" had
a. political aspects only
b. moral aspects only
c. spiritual aspects only
d. moral, political and spiritual aspects

d

20. The initial response to the Lord's preaching and miracles was one of

a. callous indifference
b. immediate opposition
c. great public enthusiasm
d. national repentance

C

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Repentance comes before salvation. How do you define repentance? Have you experienced it?

I have experienced repentance. I did so as I turned from the things I was trusting in to go to Jesus. I made a complete 180° turn & put my trust in Jesus. He saved me

MAIL TO address shown on back outside cover.
PLEASE enclose a stamped addressed envelope for the return of your corrected exam.

Lesson Three

The Principles of the King

(MATTHEW 5-7)

THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM

The Sermon on the Mount provides the principles upon which Messiah's kingdom was to be founded, and declares its underlying spiritual basis. The Old Testament prophets had already declared the form of this great kingdom. The Second Psalm, for example, had predicted that it would be marked by the enthronement of God's King upon Zion and His conquest of the uttermost parts of the earth. His law would issue from Zion; Israel would enjoy spiritual and political ascendancy; the Gentile nations would receive blessing through her. Many prophets proclaimed this (Isaiah 2; Micah 4; Ezekiel 36:25-29; Zechariah 12-14, etc.). The establishment of such a righteous kingdom demanded also righteous persons but Israel overlooked this: hence the demand both by John and Jesus for repentance. The Sermon on the Mount goes to the heart of the matter, insisting on "truth in the inward parts."

Christianity, which is introduced later on, is based on the death, resurrection and glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the descent of the Holy Spirit to form the Church. The Church itself, called out from the world, has a suffering and pilgrim character during this age. The Kingdom of Heaven, on the other hand, proclaims the government of God on the earth. The Sermon on the Mount provides the moral characteristics demanding a high standard of spirituality which are to mark the sons of the kingdom. The kingdom had not yet come, but was being announced, and its subjects prepared.

THE BEATITUDES (5:1-12)

In His tour among the synagogues Christ had demonstrated His authority over disease. This should have compelled men to acknowledge His ability to govern in every sphere. Now as the multitudes throng Him, He sat on the mountainside and told the principles that are to prevail in this government of earth by heaven.

Nine beatitudes fell from His holy lips, falling like the dew of heaven, not upon the self-sufficient religionist or proud politician, but upon the truly pious in the nation. Those who are poor in spirit, in contrast to the proud in spirit, would inherit this kingdom; the mourners over earth's spiritual destitution would enjoy its comfort; the meek would inherit the earth as foretold in Psalm 37; the hungerers after righteousness would be satisfied by seeing it in operation; the merciful would receive in kind, and the pure in heart would see God; those who promoted true peace should be recognized as God's children.

The Jewish concept of blessedness was a long life and material prosperity. The Lord takes the eye off what men *have*, and focuses it on what men *are* and describes a quality of life impossible apart from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God.

Verses 10 and 11 present two forms of persecution—one for righteousness' sake, and the other for Christ's sake. The righteous conduct of righteous men always arouses the hostility of the unrighteous. The Law of Moses provided for retaliation in kind: "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But the subjects of Christ's kingdom must bear persecution with patience and refrain from retaliation, leaving their vindication to the King. The persecution in verse 11, however, is caused by fidelity to Christ, and is more intense in form, consisting of reviling, persecution and various forms of slander. Believers are to actually rejoice in it, knowing that a great reward in heaven is theirs.

All this indicated, of course, that the kingdom would not be immediately established in power and that compensation would be given in heaven to those who exult in anticipation of this.

SALT AND LIGHT (5:13-16)

The Lord next likened His own to salt and to light. Savorless salt is worthless, but good salt has flavoring, asceptic and preservative qualities. Light of course provides illumination. Salt preserves from corruption and light dispels darkness. In a corrupt society the true sons of the kingdom must display their own inherent character of righteousness and by their very character proclaim the light of God's truth. This light is to take the form of deeds (verse 16). Men are to "see" them, and thus glorify the Father in heaven (Philippians 2:15, 16).

THE QUESTION OF THE LAW (5:17-20)

What was the Lord's relation to the Law of Moses? Christ's principles would not conflict with Moses' law. On the contrary Christ has come to "fill full" the content of the law in His own Person and work. The Scribes and Pharisees equated righteousness with religious externalism. They *said* but they did not *do*. Moreover they twisted the plain commands of God, substituting their traditions (Mark 7:1-13). The King cut through all of this artificiality and insisted on "truth in the inward parts"—a righteousness of the heart and therefore genuine. Such a high moral standard is possible only through the indwelling Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1-4).

THE QUESTION OF MOTIVE (5:21, 22)

Next the King penetrated to the deepest springs of human conduct. Moses' law could only execute sentence upon the act. He exposes and condemns the motive that prompts the act.

For example, the law forbade murder. Human courts, such as the Sanhedrin (i.e., the "Council"), exacted penalties from offenders. Even such contemptuous insults as "Raca" are not overlooked. But the Lord revealed that hatred, as manifest in the words, "You fool," or "Cursed fool" addressed to a brother would expose one to the fire of Hell itself.

In other words, human courts impose sentences of a temporary nature, but this only reflects the fact that the moral Governor of the universe does likewise on an eternal scale.

THE QUESTION OF ATTITUDE (5:23-26)

The offerer who has offended his brother must not present his offering until there has been genuine reconciliation. Only then will his gift be acceptable. External piety cannot be substituted for internal genuineness. Failure to effect reconciliation on the human level results in dire consequences. Just as prisoners are cut off from human society, so the unforgiving brother cannot acceptably worship God.

THE QUESTION OF THE MARRIAGE RELATION (5:27-32)

The seventh commandment forbade adultery, but here the Lord traced this sin to its source—a lustful heart. In God's sight a lascivious look is as heinous as the immoral act itself. It would be better to go through life maimed, could bodily members rob us of heaven, than to be physically sound and lost forever.

In verse 31 the Lord referred to the Mosaic divorce laws outlined in Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Later on (Matthew 19:8) He explained that these laws were a temporary measure on account of human hardheartedness, but was never really God's will. In the Sermon on the Mount He rescinded the Old Testament permission and declared that the one who puts away his wife causes her to commit adultery, and the one marrying her would also be guilty of the same sin. The one permitted exception is adultery on the part of one of the marriage partners. It is well for us to remember this holy injunction in these days of shallow and shifting moral standards.

THE QUESTION OF OATHS (5:33-37)

Oaths were in the nature of vows having to do with the future (Numbers

30:2). Those so vowing were obligated to perform them. "He shall not break his word." The King prohibited all such swearing. The believer must give a simple "Yes" or "No," and not reinforce his commitments by invoking things over which he has no authority. This prohibition of course has to do with swearing by intention, and involves the unknown future and many uncertain factors. It is not a prohibition regarding swearing to known facts of the past.

THE QUESTION OF RETALIATION (5:38-48)

Christ's kingdom must be marked by non-resistance to evil and reciprocity. The disciple must yield even to the extortioner and must not turn away from those who would borrow. Vengeance is to be left with God; He will repay. No matter what the climate of evil and opposition the believer must manifest the character of the heavenly Father. Merely to return love for love and hate for hate is to live by standards not a whit higher than those of the common publican of the day. Such a morality would reflect the standards of the kingdom of *earth* rather than the Kingdom of Heaven. The children of the Father in heaven should and must manifest the nature of that Father. In the present course of things at least God does not visit His judgments on evildoers. On the contrary, He makes His sun arise on the evil and the good. His own must, therefore, reflect His character and be perfect (fully mature) and worthy of the Name they bear.

HOW TO GIVE (6:1-4)

The Lord devoted considerable space to warning against selfish motives when giving, fasting and praying. All three are true Christian virtues, but if practiced in order to gain the notice or approval of men, then they are thoroughly obnoxious to God. In fact, if we seek the praise of men, then we have already received our reward. It is only when our gifts are given quietly and without ostentation that we can be sure of a public reward by and by. The motive is all-important. If we seek the

approval of men, we will probably get it, but how poor this is compared with the bright reward our Father will bestow in the coming day.

HOW TO PRAY (6:5-7)

The Lord again warned against mere outward sanctimoniousness that would attract human attention and instructed us *where* to pray (v. 6) and *how* to pray (vv. 7-15). In other parts of Scripture we are encouraged to engage in public prayer, but in verse 6 we are told how to engage in private prayer. We are to enter into our inner chamber and shut the door. This underlines the importance of absolute privacy, and a refusal of interrupting intrusions. A consciousness that the Father seeth and heareth in secret will bring the confidence of an open answer soon.

But how shall we pray? Neither like the hypocritical Pharisees nor the heathen (v. 7). The Lord here was condemning all repetition in prayer. He did this very thing Himself in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:44). The condemnation has to do with empty formulae. But although the use of mere religious verbal formulae is condemned, the Lord elsewhere does encourage us to come again and again with our petitions to our Father (Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8).

THE LORD'S PRAYER (6:8-15)

There has been much controversy about the appropriateness of the Lord's prayer for the present dispensation. To some it seems prophetic in character and best suited to the persecuted godly remnant of Israel in the midst of tribulation and persecution. But remember, it was perfectly adapted to the condition of the disciples gathered about the Lord in His day. They too were a pious remnant in the midst of the unbelieving nation. They knew nothing when this prayer was given about the Christian Church and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. At that time the Church was future and there is no mention of it at all until the Lord prophesied its coming in Matthew 16:18.

There is a very definite connection between that pious minority of Jews who clave to the Lord Jesus during the days of His flesh and the future remnant of Israel who will be entrusted with the testimony of God after the true Church has been raptured. These latter Jews will find themselves in the midst of intense opposition and this prayer will be very relevant to them. They address their Father in heaven, and desire the hallowing of His Name—that Name being blasphemed by the Man of Sin. They long for the coming of the true kingdom when the will of God will be done on earth. Their plea for daily bread highlights the economic boycott directed against them (Revelation 13:15-17). Nor will these persecuted witnesses seek retaliation, nor argue for their rights for they will manifest the spirit of their Master and forgive their debtors. But they will plead that theirs may be a deliverance from temptation and the Evil One. It is easy to see how fitting such a prayer will be in a coming day.

But we must not conclude that because this prayer contains Remnant overtones, it is inappropriate for Christians today. The Lord did not intend us merely to recite this prayer but to follow its general structure. "After this *manner* therefore pray ye." The Lord has given us a general outline. We are to pray as He indites in accordance with the full revelation of New Testament Christianity.

THE QUESTION OF FASTING (6:16-18)

Righteousness and almsgiving concern our relation *manward,* and praying our relation *Godward.* Fasting is selfward. Again the King condemned religious pretense. But the hypocrisy of parading piety does not destroy the true value and reality of fasting if it is inward and real, with no ostentation whatever. If practiced out of pure motive it will be rewarded by the Father who seeth in secret. Fasting, of course, concerns abstention from food but it also applies to many things which may be quite lawful in themselves. A man's income might make it possible for him to own an expensive home. Instead, for Christ's sake and the Gospel's, he might choose to live modestly in order to be more generous to the Lord's work.

TREASURE IN HEAVEN (6:19-24)

The Lord next warned against amassing treasures on earth, and pointed to the instability of worldly wealth (v. 19). The warning is not against providing for our daily needs. It is against accumulating the things of earth excessively. The heart will follow the eye, and if our eye is upon material things, then our heart will be there also. We cannot live for two worlds. If we try to serve God and mammon, it will be like trying to focus on two widely separated objects at the same time. There will be confused vision and an obscuring of both. These words of Jesus do not call so much for exposition as they do for simple obedience! "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

THE CURE FOR CARE (6:25-34)

The non-Christian constantly places the body before the soul, the temporal before the eternal, and the natural before the spiritual, and we Christians are in danger of doing the same. The Lord of all creation pointed to two of His own creations—the bird and the lily (vv. 26 and 28). One is animate and the other inanimate. Both have life but neither fuss over the matter of food and beauty. God feeds the one and clothes the other. If He cares so much for these relatively worthless things, how much more will He provide for those for whom He gave His Son to die!

We must not become indifferent to temporal considerations, and thus become impractical and visionary. But these things should be regarded as relatively unimportant. Anxiety must not cloud our trust and appreciation of the unfailing care of our God. Otherwise, we are no better than the Gentiles who know not God. The primary object in a believer's life should be the seeking of the kingdom of God and His righteousness. If we keep primary things in their proper place, then the secondary things will be provided by the Lord (v. 33). But if we put secondary things in the place of the primary, then we are in danger of losing both!

THE QUESTION OF JUDGING MOTIVES (7:1-6)

In dealing with this theme the King spoke of the prohibition (v. 1), the penalty (v. 2), and the principle (vv. 3-5). But what does the prohibition of verse 1 mean? The Lord cannot possibly mean that we are never to judge actions. We need not move out of Matthew 7 for confirmation of this. For how are we to discern and flee from false prophets if we are not to judge such (v. 15)? The matter under consideration is a prohibition against judging unseen motives, that hidden, unseen realm where inward motives lie, and which are beyond the reach of our knowledge. This realm is absolutely out of bounds for each of us. To judge hidden motives is the prerogative of God alone. The penalty for violating this plain command is solemnly outlined in verse 2. We shall receive in return in exact kind and measure. If we criticize and judge motives, then we may expect others to deal with us accordingly.

The Lord next discussed the principle underlying this prohibition. The "mote" in our brother's eye really means a minute particle, a fleck of dust. The "beam" in our own eye has been translated by others as a "log." Before going in for speck-removing I must first get rid of my own "log."

We must discern, however, between clean and unclean. "Dogs" and "swine" are unclean creatures, and are symbolic of the unregenerate professors of religion (2 Peter 2:22). Spiritual truths, as symbolized by pearls, must not be offered to such, for they have no spiritual capacity to appreciate them. They not only will destroy the gifts, but will seek to destroy the giver (verse 6).

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK (7:7-12)

These three verbs indicate that prayer must be in the form of petition ("ask"), it must be earnest ("seek") and it must be persevering ("knock"). These three elements enter into all prevailing prayer. The pity and concern of an earthly father for his children's need reflect the greater concern that dwells in the heart of the Heavenly Father for His spiritual children. Earthly fathers are evil, and yet they give to their

children. The Father in heaven is infinitely good. The golden rule follows (v. 12). The "therefore" links it with what has just preceded. We who have been dealt with so bountifully should, in turn, deal bountifully with our fellows. How would we have men act toward us? Is it not as children of God? Yes, decidedly! Then, let us act as such toward them regardless of their attitude. This is entirely contrary to nature, which would retaliate on the principle of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But grace teaches the believer otherwise. (See verses 7 to 12.)

THE TWO WAYS (7:13-27)

The Lord spoke in conclusion of two gates which lead two ways and end in two destinies; of two classes—professors and doers; and of two builders. This is not so much a survey of mankind in general, as of the true and the false within the context of *religion.* The wide gate and broad way is popular, and men are shown not exactly *born* onto it, but *choosing* it. They "go in thereat." It is not the way of open vileness, for no one believes vileness leads to heaven. It is the way of popular religion, trodden by the false prophets (v. 15), and those who pay lip-service to Christ (vv. 21, 22). It is the way that seems right but which ends in death (Proverbs 14:12). The Pharisees crowded this road, and millions since have thronged it. Satan, as an angel of light, with Bible in hand, leads this doomed procession.

The road to life is narrow and is entered only through the Lord Jesus Christ, "the door" (John 10:9). He is the Way. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6).

False prophets are actually wolves in sheep's clothing. Satan's ministers are "false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into the apostles of Christ" and "ministers of righteousness" (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). They advocate social betterment and morality, philanthropy and religion in the place of the gospel. They turn men's eyes away from sin and human depravity and thus deceive, for if men are not aware of their spiritual bankruptcy, they won't be interested in God's remedy through the cross.

But the fruit of a tree reveals its root. The Lord repeated this here, for emphasis (vv. 16, 20). He was not referring to immoral conduct on the part of these deceivers but to the bitter fruit of the thorns and thistles of heartbreaking experience.

The Lord spoke of another class in verses 21-23. The false prophets deceive others but these deceive themselves. Their lips profess, and their hands perform, but their hearts deny. How very solemn to think of "many" who say and do, but who do not really *obey!* The performance of religious works is no guarantee of reality. In fact, mere religion is the greatest barrier to real salvation, for it is Satan's substitute.

The two builders are referred to by the King in concluding the Sermon. Those who hear and obey are like the man who builds on the rock. His structure will stand the test. Those who obey not will see complete destruction in the end. The rock of course is Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). The sand is self-righteousness. The storm is coming wrath.

The Lord spoke throughout this famous Sermon with authority and with the ring of finality. This commanded the respect of the hearers and astonished them as well. They detected the voice of the Prophet of whom Moses wrote, "I will put my words in His mouth, and He shall speak all that I command Him" (Deuteronomy 18:18).

When you have mastered this lesson, take the first part of Exam 2 (covering lesson 3), questions 1-10 on pages 4/11-12 (right after lesson 4). Remember, you will not turn this exam in for correction until after you have done lesson 4.

Lesson Four

The Powers of the King

(MATTHEW 8, 9)

Matthew now groups together a number of miracles dealing with disease, the elements, and evil spirits. No order is followed. The Lord is displayed as Master of every situation. These miracles are the credentials of the Messiah.

In the Sermon on the Mount Christ showed what men *ought* to be; now we see what they *really are*—broken and helpless. But He has come to make them anew.

The diseases are symbolic of sin in a variety of aspects. *Leprosy* suggests the incurability of sin; *palsy*, the helplessness of sin; *fever*, the restlessness of sin; *hemorrhage*, the defilement of sin; *blindness*, the sinner's inability to comprehend spiritual things.

The miracles of Christ were not primarily for the relief of human misery. That was subsidiary to the main purpose. The Jews asked for signs (1 Corinthians 1:22, A.S.V.), for their prophets had told them the Messiah would be accredited by miracles (Isaiah 35:5, 6). But they were impervious to all evidence, and closed their eyes to the light that was shining upon them.

THE HEALING OF THE LEPER (8:1-4)

The purpose of this miracle was to bring before the official leadership of the nation a testimony to Christ. The cleansed man was told to obey the requirements of Leviticus 14. Had he obeyed, the astonished priests

might well have looked for the source of the miracle and recognized that the Messiah-Prophet had come. Unfortunately the cleansed leper disobeyed. (Note that Mark 1:45 begins with a "but.")

The first act of power is the immediate cure of a leper, something unique in the history of Israel (Naaman–2 Kings 5–was a Gentile). This was a very notable miracle indeed, and marked the Lord as God Incarnate. The "if thou wilt" of the leper met the "I will" of the Lord and the touch of His hand brought instant help. No Israelite could touch a leper without contracting defilement. Our Lord, however, stands apart from all others and no defilement touched Him.

THE CENTURION'S SERVANT (8:5-13)

In the second miracle the supplicant is a Gentile, rather than a Jew and the healing was not by touch but by word. Moreover, this man's faith was superior (v. 10). Despite this Roman centurion's heathen rearing, his faith had laid hold of the Messiah of Israel to such an extent that he believed His word alone could bring complete restoration for his servant. He was a soldier and thus under orders. In turn he had subordinates under him who promptly obeyed his orders. As his verbal commands were obeyed, so he believed that even paralysis must obey the command of Christ. The Lord was astonished and said He had not witnessed such faith even in Israel! Then He anticipated the future when the Kingdom of Heaven will become a glorious reality, and when with the patriarchs of old many Gentiles will come and be received into the eternal habitations. In that day the natural sons of the kingdom, whose faith was only superficial, will be cast into eternal misery. Truly, religious privileges, if finding no response in our hearts, may smother true and saving faith. The story concludes with the healing of the afflicted servant, not because of his faith, but because of the unwavering confidence of this believing Gentile centurion.

THE HEALING OF PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW (8:14-17)

These miracles recorded by Matthew have in view a dispensational

order. The first miracle was performed by the Savior's touch; the second was accomplished by His word. But now He once again healed by touch. Healing by touch suggests His relation to Israel, when He was, and will be, directly in their midst. The Gentile came between the two, and the Lord healed him at a distance. This is true today. Between the time of His first and second coming to Israel, He speaks as One absent from the world, though present by His Holy Spirit and His Word. Thus it is that the Gentile is being reached and blessed today.

It is significant, too, that the Lord moved from the throngs back into the house (v. 14)—another hint perhaps of His return into the midst of Israel. His touch on the fevered hand of the sick woman brought instant recovery, and she arose and ministered unto Him. It will be the same with Israel in a coming day. The persecuted remnant will recognize Him, and rejoice in His presence. His hand will be upon them for blessing, and the redeemed people will rise and minister to Him in happy service.

The paragraph concludes with the beautiful sunset scene with the throngs, in all their need, gathered about Him. Not only physical disease, but evil spirits obey Him, and not one needy person leaves unblessed. Here was a fulfillment of Isaiah's word: "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (53:4). Physical disease is the by-product of sin and there is a real sense in which it was taken care of by our Lord's atoning death on the cross. He showed this when He moved in the midst of bruised and broken Israel, and will do so again when He returns in power and glory. We must not conclude that it is God's purpose to relieve all present day believers of all physical disability. Romans 8:18-25 clearly teaches that although the believer has received the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit he nevertheless groans in concert with a groaning creation. It will not be until the revelation of Christ that the bondage and curse will be removed. Hence, we wait for the redemption of our bodies; we do not have this redemption yet. "For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened" (2 Corinthians 5:4).

THE TESTING OF TWO ENTHUSIASTS (8:18-22)

The mighty miracles of the Lord Jesus have made quite a sensation

throughout the country, and the crowds throng Him. Ever shunning mere human popularity, He ordered the little company to cross the lake. But before they could embark a Scribe came and volunteered to follow Him regardless of the path. The Lord did not seek to quench his ardor but tested it by pointing out the self denial and ruggedness of the path He trod. This was sufficient to dampen the enthusiasm of the volunteer. Then a second person volunteered but asked permission to first bury his father. The inference is that his father was not yet dead. He would have put human sentiment and natural relationship ahead of Christ. The Lord will not take second place, and ordered the man to follow Him, leaving those who are spiritually dead to bury the physically dead. Christ must come first!

THE STORM AT SEA (8:23-27)

The Lord does not promise His own a smooth voyage but He does promise a safe landing! This is the lesson of this storm.

He led the way into this experience for "His disciples followed Him" (v. 23). Of course He knew that a storm was gathering and that His followers would panic when it broke. Yet He deliberately led the way, for He would display His mastery over every situation. They were to see in Him further glories and ascribe to Him the worship of their hearts. He was so tired that He slept in the stern of the vessel though the storm was great and the ship awash. How perfect was His humanity! He was so human that He relaxed on the helmsman's cushion and fell asleep! Gripped by panic, and as a last resort, the terrified disciples awoke Him. Calmly He rose, reproved their little faith and then rebuked the winds and raging seas. The "great tempest" (v. 24) was followed by the "great calm" (v. 26).

There was good reason for His chiding them for their little faith. Disease and demons had bowed to His authority and owned Him Lord. Why should they be astonished if the elements owned His supremacy too? But let us beware! Too often we condemn the disciples for their dullness and thereby condemn ourselves as well.

What a contrast there is between the "great faith" of the Gentile

centurion (v. 10) and the "little faith" of His own disciples (v. 26). Truly miracles do not provide the best soil for growing this plant called "faith." We may have head-knowledge of the ways of God but still be very slow to believe in His present delivering power.

Note also that the Lord "rebuked" the winds and seas, indicating the storm to be Satanic in origin. This was another of the Devil's attempts to destroy Him. Since only *God* can control the roaring of the seas (Psalms 65:7; 107:29), this miraculous incident demonstrated both the humanity and the deity of the Lord Jesus. As man, He slept; as God, He commanded the elements. "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" marveled the disciples.

THE TWO DEMONIACS CURED (8:28-34)

This miracle as recorded by Mark (ch. 5) and Luke (ch. 8), refers to only one demoniac. According to Matthew, however, there were *two* men involved. Probably the one called "Legion" was more prominent than the other, so that the other Evangelists center their attention on him.

The number two is used throughout Scripture for competent witness (Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1). Since Matthew is establishing the fact of Jesus' Messiahship, he records the miraculous healing of *two* demoniacs, and, later on, the restoring of sight of *two* blind men (9:27-31).

This is the briefest of the three accounts. Matthew deals only with the broad facts of the case and passes the details irrelevant to his purpose. The significant touch he does add concerns the outcry of the afflicted men. "What have we to do with Thee, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (v. 29). In the other accounts these last three words are omitted. The demons there plead for no present torment. But here they acknowledge that future punishment awaits them, and seem terrified lest Christ advance His timetable.

Is it not significant that demons acknowledge the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and future conscious punishment? They know, but are opposed to God and His Son. They realize their eternal doom is

sealed by the just and angry God. Their course and fate are irrevocable and they know it. Their consciousness of Christ's supremacy is further seen in their request to enter the swine (v. 31). "They besought Him." This was greatly preferable to their being dispatched to the abyss (see Luke 8:31, A.S.V.), though ultimately this will be their prison (Revelation 20:1-3). This prayer was granted but the pigs preferred death to demon possession and stampeded to their death. The countrymen consequently urged the Deliverer to leave and He complied, for He will not force Himself upon any.

THE PALSIED MAN HEALED (9:1-8)

These great miracles of Jesus were bringing increasingly into the open not only His Messiahship but also the attitude of the official leadership of Israel toward Him. Before this chapter and this section of the Gospel closes, they have repudiated Him and attributed to Him both blasphemy (v. 3) and complicity with Satan (v. 34). It took these acts of mighty power to bring to light their real attitude toward Christ and God.

Matthew, Mark (2:1-12) and Luke (5:17-26) recount this miracle but Matthew's account is the briefest. He included only those details which best served his purpose. In the double blessing of forgiveness of sin and the cure of the paralysis our Lord plainly showed Himself as Jehovah. Every Scribe was conversant with the Old Testament and those present should have recognized Jesus from Psalm 103:3. There Jehovah had been described as the One who "forgiveth all thine iniquities and healeth all thy diseases." Deity was in their midst, clothed with humanity, full of grace and truth, and they knew Him not! Indeed, when He pronounced divine forgiveness, the Scribes inwardly charged Him with blasphemy. He immediately perceived in His spirit their wicked reasonings (v. 4) and thus He proved His omniscience. *Light* had come into the world but they deliberately turned away from it. They loved the darkness. They did not *want* to believe. But the masses rejoiced and glorified God. Their discernment did not rise too high, but at least they partially recognized the One, regarded by their leaders as an imposter, as the Messiah.

MATTHEW'S CALL AND FEAST (9:9-17)

Matthew now records the great spiritual crisis Jesus brought into his life. He had been a publican, or tax-gatherer, employed by the hated Roman government. The Master had accosted him with two brief words —"Follow Me." His response had been unquestioning and immediate. He had probably heard of Jesus before and had counted the cost, so when the call came, he obeyed. To express his appreciation to his new master and to acquaint his fellow-businessmen with Him, Matthew prepared a feast. The guests of honor were Jesus and His disciples. For Christ to socialize with publicans and sinners was a serious breach of convention in the eyes of the Pharisees. "Your Teacher," they sneered, "why does He eat with such outcasts?" But instead of embarrassing Jesus they only displayed their ignorance of the God who delights in mercy, and to whom true sacrifice is a broken and contrite heart. These Pharisees thought themselves righteous men. He had not come for such! Only the sick require a physician; only the sinner needs a Savior. He had come for those and the self-sufficiency of the Pharisees precluded any grace flowing out to them. They knew the text of Scripture but had missed its meaning, so He said, "Go ye and learn what this meaneth, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' " They gloried in ritual but of mercy they knew nothing.

John's disciples now came to Jesus with a sincere question. Notice that they came directly to Him, and not to His disciples, as did the Pharisees. Evidently John still retained a following (11:2). These men were perplexed over the contrast existing between their own conduct and that of the followers of Jesus: why did not Christ's disciples fast, as did they and the Pharisees? The answer was revealing. The Bridegroom and His guests were together; therefore rejoicing was in order. But this would not last. The Bridegroom would be removed and then fasting would be appropriate. This is the first real intimation in this Gospel of Christ's rejection. This rejection would bring a long period of mourning and discipline—fasting, not only in absention from foods, but also of many other things out of place in view of the world's hostile attitude. An illustration may be found in the conduct of Mephibosheth during the absence of David, the true king, during the usurpation of

the throne by Absalom (2 Samuel 19:24).

The Lord next pointed out some of the radical changes which would accompany His rejection. A new order of things would be introduced, something quite different from Judaism. The old garment would not merely be patched but replaced. A garment in Scripture speaks of outward conduct and external righteousness, whether human or divine (see Isaiah 61:10; 64:6; Romans 3:21, 22). The Christian Gospel provides, not patches for the old, but a new vesture of righteousness from God.

The new wine suggests the inward energies of the Holy Spirit—the power and joy of the new life which cannot be contained in the dry and unyielding vessels of ritualism. The old garment and the old bottles (or wine-skins) represent a decadent legalism. In attempting to introduce the expansive power of vibrant Christianity into legal systems, men have destroyed both! The rent is made worse and the bottles destroyed. The Gospel provides the new inward power and the new outward garment.

A WOMAN AND A MAN MEET CHRIST (9:18-26)

The next two miracles telescope the one into the other. While the Lord was on His way to help the man, a woman intercepted Him and received great blessing. This suggests a dispensational lesson. Before dead Israel can be raised to life, the Gentiles who intercept Him on the way come into blessing. When the present work among these Gentiles is done He will restore Israel, but not before expelling all the "religious minstrels" from that nation! Then will follow the Kingdom of God in world-wide power and blessing (v. 35).

Notice the word "touch" in verse 21, and the words "took her by the hand" in verse 25. The dying woman touched Him, but in the case of the dead girl Christ touched her, illustrating the human and the divine elements of salvation. Moreover, both miracles entailed faith in Christ. In the case of the ruler, faith was exercised by him on behalf of the dead daughter. His words expressed his full confidence, "she *shall* live" (v. 18). But the woman's confidence was personal. "I *shall* be

whole," she said (v. 21).

The sinner is both dead and sick! God can give divine life to the dead sinner. The Great Physician can impart spiritual healing. Furthermore, although the Savior dealt graciously with the broken and needy, He also dealt sternly with disbelievers and scoffers (v. 25).

THE BLIND SEE; THE DUMB SPEAK; THE CRITICS BLASPHEME (9:27-34)

The two blind men were blind only in a physical sense, for their faith was keen sighted indeed. They recognized Jesus as Son of David (the first mention of this title in this Gospel), and believed Him capable of opening their eyes. And according to their faith their blindness was instantly removed. Christ was the source of the miracle, their faith the means of it.

The gift of speech is God given and the Devil delights in distorting it and destroying it. Here Christ expelled a demon and restored speech. A sinner's salvation results in both spiritual sight and spiritual speech. Prophetically, this incident reflects the grace of the Messiah to Israel at His return when Israel will look upon Him whom they pierced, and will call upon the name of the Lord (Zechariah 12:10; Zephaniah 3:9).

In contrast with the two blind men, given sight in response to their faith, the religious leaders who professed perfect spiritual sight were really blind, for they rejected the evidence of Jesus' Messiahship and attributed His miracles to Satan. This was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, the unpardonable sin. No greater insult could be hurled at the Son of God.

THE KING PREACHES, TEACHES, HEALS AND PITIES (9:35-38)

Despite the invective of the religious leaders, the King continued to move in power and compassion among the people. We gather from verse 35 that He visited every community and cured one and all. No hamlet was too small, no disease too difficult. This King is master of all.

The "gospel of the kingdom" involved bodily healing, and was peculiarly for Israel (4:23; 10:7, 8; 24:14).

The people "fainted and were scattered abroad," we are told. Other versions add to the vividness of the picture. They were "harassed and cast away" (Darby), "distressed and downcast" (N.A.S.B.), "bewildered and miserable" (Phillips). These shepherdless sheep awakened the compassion of the Shepherd of Israel. No cold professional was He! Israel is likened not only to scattered sheep, but to a ripened harvest as well. Shepherds are needed to feed and harvesters are needed to reap. His own must pray therefore that He will thrust forth laborers to reap.

When you are ready, complete Exam 2 by answering questions 11-20 on pages 4/13-15. (You should have already answered questions 1-10 as part of your study of lesson 3.)

When you have answered all the questions in Exam 2, mail the exam for correction.

MATTHEW

Exam 2
Lessons 3, 4

Name _____ (print plainly) Exam Grade _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Class Number _____

Instructor _____

LESSON 3

In the blank space in the right-hand margin write the letter of the correct answer.

1. The Sermon on the Mount
   a. gives us the code of conduct by which the nations of today must be governed
   b. spells out God's plan of salvation for this age
   c. reveals the principles upon which the Messiah's kingdom was to be founded
   d. has little or nothing to do with the kingdom — c

2. The Sermon on the Mount begins with
   a. five commandments
   b. ten revisions of the Mosaic law
   c. nine beatitudes
   d. four woes — c

3. The Sermon on the Mount
   a. contents itself with a fresh restatement of the letter of the law
   b. goes to the heart of the matter and focuses on our motives
   c. completely cancelled and annulled the Mosaic law
   d. ignores the Law of Moses altogether — a

4. So far as divorce is concerned, the Lord Jesus
   a. simply endorsed the Old Testament position
   b. avoided the issue entirely
   c. called for a much higher standard than that which prevailed in the Old Testament
   d. forbade it altogether under any and every circumstance — c

5. Which of the following marks Christ's ideal kingdom?
   a. non-resistance to evil
   b. retaliation in kind
   c. denial of authority
   d. passive resistance

a

6. According to the Sermon on the Mount, which is to characterize prayer?
   a. publicity
   b. privacy
   c. eloquence
   d. immediate answers

b

7. Fasting
   a. must be done secretly
   b. relates only to the matter of food
   c. should be done publicly to aid one's testimony for Christ
   d. is for the kingdom age only

a

8. Which of the following best states what our attitude should be towards temporal things? They
   a. are of prime importance and ought to be given priority in our scale of values
   b. are of secondary importance and if kept in their place will be taken care of for us by the Lord
   c. are valueless and ought to be given no place in our thinking at all
   d. are equal in importance with spiritual things and so we ought to alternate in our priorities between the temporal and the spiritual

b

9. What should be our attitude towards judging others? We must
   a. never judge anyone else at all
   b. seek to avoid judging motives
   c. judge everybody and everything
   d. wait until we are perfect before attempting to judge even those things we are supposed to judge

b

10. Who are the "wise builders"? Those who
    a. hear and obey the Lord's words
    b. make sure their old age will be cared for
    c. profess allegiance to Christ even though they do not follow through with godly living
    d. "look before they leap"

a

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

How do you know you are on the way that leads to life everlasting?

Because Jesus has come to live in me in the person of the Holy Spirit. He gives me everlasting life

LESSON 4

In the blank space in the right-hand margin write the letter of the correct answer.

11. In recounting the miracles of chapters 8 and 9, Matthew
a. follows a strict chronological order
b. groups together a number of miracles regardless of order
c. has in mind an overall plan of persuading the Romans that Jesus was a greater King than Caesar
d. recounts the same miracles recorded in John's Gospel

b

12. The miracles of Jesus were primarily intended to
a. excite wonder and admiration in people
b. relieve human misery
c. prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah
d. put Jesus on a par with Moses and Elijah

c

13. The second miracle related by Matthew involved a person who was outlawed from the Jewish commonwealth because he was
a. a leper
b. a criminal
c. a Gentile
d. an apostate

a

14. Isaiah's words about the Messiah, "surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows"
a. will be fulfilled at the Lord's return
b. were fulfilled in the Lord's healing miracles
c. are fulfilled in the mass healing meetings held today by certain "faith healers"
d. were symbolic and are fulfilled only when a person is saved and made whole spiritually

b

15. In the incident of the stilling of the storm we have illustrated
a. our Lord's humanity only
b. our Lord's deity only
c. both our Lord's humanity and His deity
d. neither the humanity nor the deity of the Lord

C

16. Matthew records the healing of two demoniacs at Gadara; Mark and Luke mention only one. This
a. proves that there is a contradiction between the two accounts
b. can be explained only on the grounds that Matthew's incident was on a different occasion than the incident mentioned by the others
c. is in keeping with Matthew's aim of establishing the fact of the Messiahship of Jesus
d. is an example of Matthew's use of hyperbole

C

17. When the Lord pronounced forgiveness of sins on the palsied man, the Scribes
a. inwardly blasphemed
b. publicly accused Christ of blasphemy
c. inwardly charged Christ with blasphemy
d. recognized Jesus as Messiah and God

C

18. The first real intimation in Matthew's Gospel that Christ would be rejected
a. was made by the Lord Himself
b. came when Herod murdered John the Baptist
c. was manifested at the tomb of Lazarus
d. was given in response to the Sermon on the Mount

a

19. The old garment and the old wine-skins, in the Lord's parable, represent
a. an outworn legalism
b. the old nature in the believer
c. decadent political systems
d. apostate Christendom

a

20. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is
a. pardonable under certain circumstances
b. the sin of attributing Christ's miracles to Satanic power
c. committed by all who reject Christ's claims to be the Son of God
d. only possible by those who have heard the full New Testament gospel preached in clarity and power

C

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

The diseases Jesus healed are symbolic, in a sense, of sin in the various ways sin fastens upon us. Leprosy, for example, illustrates the incurability of sin. Have you been delivered by the Lord from any particular aspects of the disease of sin? Give one example.

Jesus forgave me of my sin of disobedience when I ask Him to come into my life. He forgives me daily as I ask Him.

MAIL TO address shown on back outside cover.
PLEASE enclose a stamped addressed envelope for the return of your corrected exam.

Lesson Five

The King Proclaimed and Persecuted

(MATTHEW 10-12)

THE KING PROCLAIMED (10:1-42)

The King has now made a tour of the Galilean synagogues, apparently visiting every community and every Jewish congregation. In these He announced the good news of His kingdom, and certified His kingship by curing every case of sickness. He had no failures. Israel's Messiah and God was indeed in the midst. The disciples were told to pray that the Lord of the Harvest would send forth laborers. So now the Lord proceeded to commission and equip His twelve disciples for this very task. He gave to these men complete power over both demons and disease which alike would yield to their authority through His Name (v. 1).

The names of the Twelve (described in verse one as "disciples" and in verse two as "apostles," i.e. "missionaries") are now given. In the various listings of these twelve men, Simon Peter always comes first, and Judas Iscariot last (see Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16) which is just what we would expect. Little enough is recorded of the activities of these apostles in the Gospels, and after a brief mention of them in the opening chapter of Acts, most of them entirely disappear.

It is important to have a proper perspective of this commission. We must not read into this chapter events and truths that have developed since Christ's death and resurrection and the Spirit's descent at Pentecost. This mission of the Twelve was long before these tremendous events took place. The Church as Christ's body, composed of both Jew

and Gentile, was unknown to them at this time. The Lord had come primarily to Israel (Romans 15:8). The scribes and priests who should have been the shepherds were but wretched hirelings, and although there was a small believing Jewish remnant, the masses were spiritually lost. The Lord therefore equipped twelve under-shepherds to seek out these lost sheep. At the same time they were "as sheep in the midst of wolves" (v. 16), and were about to receive cruel treatment from countrymen and from their own relatives. But as cross-bearers for the present, they would be the crown-wearers in a coming day.

These twelve messengers, then, were strictly limited to Israel (see v. 5) and were to proclaim the identical message as John (ch. 3:2), and their Master, Jesus, had proclaimed (see ch. 4:17; 9:35). And inasmuch as "the Jews require a sign" (1 Corinthians 1:22), they were empowered to perform miracles, even to the raising of the dead. They were to avoid elaborate preparations and equipment because of the urgency and the brevity of the mission and because they were being sent to the professed people of God (contrast Luke 22:35, 36). Peace would descend upon the home that received them, but condemnation upon those who rejected them and their message. The treatment meted out to them would reflect the attitude directed toward their Lord (see vv. 11-14).

The King foreknew, of course, the ill-treatment His emissaries would receive. But this foreknowledge in no wise determined the action nor relieved the actors of their guilt and responsibility. He warned the disciples and told them how to behave. They would have the Spirit of their Father and the Holy Ghost would give them wisdom and patience (vv. 16-21).

There are far reaching prophetic implications in this chapter. True, there was a temporary and local commission but the chapter reaches on to the second coming from heaven of the Son of Man (v. 23).

These twelve of course did not continue until the Lord's return so we must conclude that they are the vanguard of the godly remnant of Israel who will resume this self-same ministry upon the completion of this present Christian age. Christianity was not established until after Israel rejected the Messianic claims of Jesus. At the conclusion of this Church age, the Lord will again turn to Israel and an Israelitish missionary remnant will resume the commission of this chapter. This is con-

firmed in the twenty-fourth chapter. To attempt to pour this chapter into the mould of present day missions leads only to confusion. If kept in its proper dispensational setting it harmonizes perfectly with other New Testament truths. This commission contained the Messiah's offer of His kingdom to the covenant people of Israel. It became effective at our Lord's first advent; it has been interrupted by the Church age and it will be resumed just prior to the return of the Son of Man to the earth.

However, there is much moral instruction here that applies to all the servants of Christ, Jewish or Christian. The disciple is to share the lot of his teacher (not "master," see A.S.V.), and the servant must expect the treatment received by his lord. The day of public manifestation will expose every secret thought and device so the servant must boldly proclaim the truth he has secretly received from his Lord (vv. 25-27).

Men must not be feared for they can only kill the body. Beyond that they cannot go. But God can destroy both soul and body in hell (gehenna–the lake of fire), and therefore must be feared most. Yet God is the Father of these disciples and they could be assured of His tenderest care (vv. 28-31). Confession or denial of Christ on earth amidst hostile circumstances will determine the attitude of their Lord before the Father (vv. 32,33).

Then, as now, the Lord would be a controversial Figure, and men would take sides either for or against Him (vv. 34-39). This would awaken strife and call for severe self-denial. Hospitality and provision for one of Christ's own servants amidst such distress would bring its sure reward. The Lord guaranteed this even of the most insignificant of actions. A cup of cold water, given in the name of a John Baptist, a Barnabas, or a Mary Magdalene would not be overlooked or go unrewarded (vv. 40-42).

THE PERSECUTION OF THE KING (11, 12)

The Twelve went to fulfill their commission and as they depart the Lord went forth Himself to teach and preach in the cities of Galilee (11:1).

Four classes of people are now introduced. *John* (vv. 2-15) represents the doubters; *"this generation"* (vv. 16-19), the indifferent; *the cities* (vv. 20-24) exemplify obdurate unbelief; and *the babes* (vv. 25-30) represent true believers on Christ.

1. John the Baptist (11:2-15)

In Herod's dungeon at Machaerus John the Baptist had been pondering the strange developments of recent days. The last of the Old Testament prophets, he had preached the Kingship and kingdom of the Lord Jesus. He expected Christ to be crowned and Israel delivered from the Gentiles. How then could his imprisonment be explained? Why was there no divine interference? Had he been mistaken in Jesus? Wracked with doubt he sent messengers to get answers to his questions.

The Lord Jesus pointed to His works, and not merely to His words in answering John for His miracles were His credentials. The messengers were to report to John the things that they both heard and saw (v. 4). They had heard words; they had seen works. By both words and works Jesus Christ had attested to His divine Messiahship. The first miracle listed is the recovering of sight to the blind. The inspired record tells of no blind man receiving sight until Jesus Christ came. Isaiah had listed this very miracle as one of the great Messianic signs (see ch. 35:4-6). The predictions and their fulfillment proved Jesus to be the true Messiah.

Note the beatitude of verse six. To be offended means to be stumbled. The Lord is saying that happy is the man who is not turned aside, however mysterious and apparently harsh his allotted circumstances may be.

The Lord then paid a tremendous tribute to John. While He sent him a gentle reproof, behind his back He clothed him with honor. John was no shaky reed bowing and bending to every breeze. He was a super-prophet. Other Old Testament seers had told of the Coming One, but John had actually announced Him and had baptized Him. In fact, John himself had been the subject of prophecy (Malachi 3:1). And although "John did no miracle"

(John 10:41), no prophetic predecessor had exceeded him for greatness. What a compliment from the King Himself! Nevertheless, the least in the kingdom would be greater than John. The kingdom announcement having been met with resistance on every side had brought the shadow of the cross athwart the King's pathway. But even the repudiation of the Messiah could not upset the program of God; the kingdom would eventually appear despite every opposition. And the one comparatively insignificant in it in the day of its manifestation would enjoy a position of greater glory than the herald who was martyred before its establishment.

2. The Jewish Generation (11:16-19)

Resembling irresponsible children playing at both weddings and funerals, the Jewish people were pleased with neither John's asceticism nor the Savior's sociability. The Baptist's austerity provoked their hate, but so did also Christ's friendliness. Those privileged Jews who would have neither the asperity of faithfulness nor the gentle glow of grace would eventually have to face the consequences of their fatal choice. Contemptuously Jesus' critics referred to Him as the friend of sinners (v. 19). Unwittingly they paid Him a magnificent compliment, for this is exactly what He is.

3. The Galilean Cities (11:20-24)

The doubtings of John and the indifference of the masses was followed by the Lord's denunciation of those Galilean cities which had witnessed some of His mightiest works. Their privileges had been unequalled but pride and unbelief had blinded them to the majesty of the One in their midst. Because judgment is always based on light, their condemnation would be much more severe than those wicked cities of antiquity whose privileges had been so much less. Those today who have the full blaze of Gospel light will be held far more accountable than the pagan who has never heard the Savior's name.

4. The "Babes" (11:25-30)

The final movement of this chapter is in contrast with what has gone before. All the pressures crowding in on the Lord Jesus could not crush His spirit nor dry up the springs of praise. Turning from the dark circumstances surrounding Him, He lifted His heart to the Father, and rejoiced in His perfect wisdom.

Israel has denied the throne of David to her King, but the Father has delivered everything into His hands. The Father knows the Son and the Son knows the Father, and this knowledge is given only to those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.

The great invitation which closes the chapter contains an obligation and an education. Israel's rejection opens the door of the Gospel to all. To those conscious of their burdens He gives rest. This is His free gift to all. But there is a second rest which demands the recognition of Christ's Lordship. The yoke is not to be shared both by Him and me, but it is a single one, His alone. I must come under His authority. Obedience to Christ simplifies life and yields true rest of spirit. This is the rest Christ Himself enjoyed throughout His life. The secret of His serenity lay in His constant submission to the Father. We too will enter into the same rest as we assume His easy yoke.

THE SUPERIOR CHRIST (12:1-50)

For the first time in this Gospel an official conspiracy is held to kill the Lord. The Pharisees, whose religious specialty was the finer interpretation of Moses' law, were its instigators. Their hostility was heightened by the bold claims of Jesus.

1. Christ Is Lord (12:1-13)

The first incident was occasioned by the Lord's alleged violation of the Sabbath. He had defended His followers for rubbing the grain between their hands and then eating it on the Sabbath (Luke

6:1). The Pharisees doubtless did recognize the legality of the plucking of the grain (Deuteronomy 23:25). They pounced upon the rubbing process, charging this was *work!* Thus the disciples were violating the Sabbath! The Lord did not attack their silly tradition. Instead He claimed that He, the Son of Man, was Lord of the Sabbath, superior to it in every way.

The Sabbath, the only command of the ten that was ceremonial and not just moral, had been given to Israel as a "sign" at the time of the giving of the law (Nehemiah 9:13, 14; Exodus 31: 13-17). Since the Lord of the Sabbath was now rejected the "sign" of Israel's special relationship to God was annulled. The covenant was shattered, and the nation adrift.

Significantly too the Lord referred to David's eating of the shewbread (1 Samuel 21:1-6). David, a non-priest, had eaten the sacred priestly bread, and thus violated the Levitical law. But the Lord justified him for this. The circumstances were similar. As long as David, the true king of Israel, was being rejected, Israel's whole relationship with God was in eclipse. Moreover, everything —the Sabbath included—was in abeyance as long as the true Messiah was being spurned. This made ridiculous the quibbling of the Pharisees.

In this chapter our Lord claims superiority to the Temple (v. 6), the Sabbath (v. 8), to Jonah (v. 41), and to Solomon (v. 42). This must have staggered the Jews. We, too, recognize something of the magnitude of these claims. If they were false, he is not entitled to our respect, to say nothing of our trust and our worship.

The Temple was most sacred to the Jews, but Jesus was superior to all that it stood for. The Sabbath was their most holy day, but *He* was God's true rest. Jonah, the only prophet who had experienced typical death and resurrection, and who, following this experience, had seen a great revival among the Gentiles, was only a shadow of the Christ who was about to give substance to all this. And likewise Solomon, whose wisdom had attracted the Queen of Sheba, was but a faint reflection of Him, the source of true wisdom and knowledge.

The Lord Jesus next demonstrated Himself to be Lord of the Sabbath by healing a member of the synagogue congregation (vv. 9-13). The critics were silenced.

2. An Important Turning Point (12:14-21)

For the first time the religionists conspired to destroy Jesus. Nor did the Lord resist; He simply withdrew Himself. His popularity with the masses continued and blessing still flowed from Him. Notice the words, "He healed them all" (v. 15). Christ never had a single failure. How *could* He?

In the delightful citation from Isaiah (42:1-4) that follows, we are made aware of an overflow of blessing to the Gentiles. Furthermore what a contrast there is between the Lord's gentle attitude toward the helpless and broken, and His attitude of righteous severity toward the unbelieving religionists. Israel was a generation that was "evil" in its nature, and "adulterous" in its practice (v. 39).

Three most significant events are grouped here. There was the first official conspiracy to murder the Lord (v. 14), the immediate withdrawal of Christ (v. 15), and the silencing of all the witnesses (v. 16). Thus Jesus having accepted Jewish rejection is about to turn to the Gentiles. Matthew's quotation of the Isaiah passage is thus very significant. In His name the outcast Gentiles will trust.

3. The Issues Defined (12:22-37)

The miracle of the demon-possessed man who was both blind and dumb again accredited Jesus, and the crowd recognized it. But the religionists, unable to deny the miracle, attributed it to Satan and in so doing they branded Jesus Christ as an emissary from hell! Could blasphemy be greater?

In reply, the Lord Jesus exposed their argument as ridiculous and affirmed that His power over Satan's kingdom was from the Holy Spirit. God's kingdom, and God's true King, was in their very midst. The strong man, Satan, would be bound! His house

and his goods would be spoiled! Men must therefore take sides. He that was not with Jesus was against Him. There could be no neutrality. It was no longer ignorance; it was a declaration of war.

The unpardonable sin was the branding as diabolical the power of the divine Spirit as seen in Jesus. By regarding Him as a demon-possessed imposter, one cuts himself off from all hope of salvation. In repudiating the great Forgiver, he seals his own doom making forgiveness impossible.

Unbelieving Jewish officialdom was a nest of vipers (literally, a brood of deadly snakes); their hearts were filled with venom. These burning words of condemnation were not a sudden, passionate or exaggerated outburst, but the truthful pronouncements of Deity.

4. The Demand for Another Sign (12:38-42)

How many signs did they need? The only sign possible now would be the reality of which Jonah's experience was but the figure. Jonah, having passed through figurative death and resurrection, carried God's message to the Gentiles, and at this message they repented. Christ would experience the full reality. Worldwide blessing would follow. Not only so, the penitent Ninevites, having received God's message through a failing servant, would rise up in future condemnation of those who were reflecting the unfailing Servant. The Queen of Sheba too would join with these prosecuting witnesses, for she came a great distance to hear Solomon's wisdom, and the greater than Solomon stood among them. But *He* was belittled and refused. Note in passing that the Ninevites teach us the necessity for repentance; the queen of Sheba, faith. The former turned from their sin; the latter was attracted to a person. The Gospel involves both.

5. The Empty House (12:43-45)

The vacated house, eventually tenanted by an intensified concentration of demon power, contains a solemn lesson. The Jewish

nation, which had embraced idolatry prior to the Babylonian captivity, had expurgated this abomination from its national life. But no new tenant had taken up residence. Idolatry had been abandoned but the true Messiah had not been given admittance. Hence in the final stage of Israel's history there would be an intensified form of evil. In a coming day Israel will accept an imposter as their divine Messiah (Matthew 24:15; John 5:43; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4; Revelation 13:11-18). The final state will thus be much worse than the first.

The personal lesson should not be overlooked also. Habits and certain sins may be conquered and yet the life remain empty of God's true Savior. Such a vacuum will not last long for sin will soon reassert itself, and that in a most virulent way. Let us beware of mere religious profession.

6. The New Relationship (12:46-50)

In renouncing natural ties, the Lord Jesus indicated that true relationships rest on spiritual foundations. His mother and brethren represented Israel after the flesh. Those who do the heavenly Father's will are those truly related to Him. This would obviously take in the Gentile. Israel was one nation, and Judaism was thoroughly nationalistic (Galatians 1:13). The nation had utterly failed. Its rejection of the Messiah was its crowning sin.

When you have mastered this lesson, take the first part of Exam 3 (covering lesson 5), questions 1-10 on pages 6/11-13 (right after lesson 6). Remember, you will not turn this exam in for correction until after you have done lesson 6.

Lesson Six

The Rejected King

(MATTHEW 13, 14)

THE KINGDOM PARABLES (13:1-52)

The Lord Jesus has been officially rejected by Israel. Henceforth the only family relationship He can own is a spiritual one. Natural ties give way to spiritual, and the doer of God's will, whether Jew or Gentile, is henceforth recognized as His kin. His action in leaving "the house" and sitting beside "the sea" was symbolic. The "house" was Israel, the former habitation of God; the sea is the Gentile world (Revelation 17:15). Notice that it was the "same day" as the incident of chapter 12:46-50. For the first time in this Gospel, and against this background, the Lord formally used parables. The disciples were perplexed (v. 10). Why this new method of teaching? The answer was immediately given: the parables were *to reveal and to conceal.* They would reveal new truth to the friends of Christ, but conceal it from His foes. Notice then the distinction between "you"–the believing remnant–and "them," the unbelieving nation (vv. 11-13). Christ never increased the condemnation of deliberate rejectors of His truth by forcing upon them more light. He simply gave them over to the blindness that they had chosen.

These parables explain that a long period intervenes between the cross and the public acknowledgment of Jesus Christ. The "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (v. 11) have to do with this period. Messiah's kingdom as revealed in the Old Testament was to be a theocracy on earth with Israel at the center, and the Gentiles receiving blessing through God's chosen people. But a revolutionary change is introduced.

The Kingdom of Heaven now involves "mysteries," or secret elements. The Old Testament promises could not be cancelled (Romans 11:29) so the whole program must be postponed to a future day. In the meantime a new and revised form of the kingdom must appear. This new order involves a kingdom without a visible king, without a visible capital, and without ethnic limitations. It extends from Advent to Advent, covering the entire period of the King's absence from this world. Moreover, it is international in extent embracing all who profess allegiance to Him. Both true and false are included in this *phase* of the Kingdom of Heaven–wheat and tares, good fish and bad, wise virgins and foolish. At the King's return He will uproot and remove from the kingdom all offenders and pretenders (v. 41; 24:40, 41).

1. The Sower, the Seed and the Soils (13:3-23)

This parable appears in the three Synoptic Gospels, and is of basic importance (Mark 4:13).

The Sower is primarily Christ. No longer seeking fruit from the vine of Israel (Isaiah 5:7; Luke 13:6), He now sows looking for a crop in the future. During His absence we sow on His behalf.

There are four soils–the wayside, rocky, thorny and good, of which only the latter produces permanent fruit, and even this soil produces a varied yield. The barrenness in the first three sowings is not in the seed, but in the defective soil. The seed is the Word of God (Mark 4:14; 1 Peter 1:23); the soil is the heart of man which reacts in various ways to the truth of God.

Wayside hearers are those who hear but do not apprehend, all impression being removed by demon powers. The rocky soil represents those who yield an immediate response, but who abandon all profession when they encounter resistance. No real and lasting work is done in the heart; they are professors and not possessors. The thorny soil represents those who permit earthly concerns, riches and other temporalities to choke out all life. The good ground represents hearers who hear, understand and embrace by faith the good Word of God. This soil is hospitable to the seed and the result is permanent fruit.

2. **The Wheat and the Tares** (13:24-30, 36-43)

Here are two sowers, two crops and two harvests. And again the Lord explains.

In the first parable *we* may be the sowers but in this one the Lord alone is the Sower. In this parable the seed represents the true children of God, not merely the Word that produces children of God. The rival sower, the Devil, plants his seed, namely his own children, alongside the true. Satan's children are so similar outwardly to the real children of the kingdom that only angels can discriminate between them. The field, therefore, remains a place of mixed growth until the consummation of the age. The field represents the *world,* not the Church. The Lord was not envisaging His Church as composed of a religious mixture. "The field is the *world*" (v. 38), particularly Christendom, the *professing* church. This phase of the Kingdom of Heaven, then, embraces all baptized religious profession. We often cannot discern between the true and false but at harvest-time, at the end of the age, the Son of Man will discriminate, and assign each to his proper destiny.

3. **The Mustard Seed** (13:31, 32)

The Lord did not interpret the remaining five parables so we must gather their meaning by comparing Scripture with Scripture using as much as possible the keys already given in the preceding interpretations.

A tree sometimes symbolizes an earthly kingdom (Daniel 4); "birds" have already been used to depict the devil and his agents (v. 19). Later on the Lord emphasizes the insignificance of the grain of mustard (17:20). With these keys in our hands we can unlock the parable. The entire sphere of Christian profession sprouts from small beginnings into a gigantic institution, rooted firmly in the earth. It produces great branches which shades every comer, and shelters every heresy. Its growth is abnormal, and its overall development is a betrayal of true Christianity. What a picture this is of modern Christendom, with its great Protestant,

Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches. And of course there are countless limbs and twigs to accommodate every unclean bird of heresy.

4. The Leaven, the Lump and the Woman (13:33)

Leaven in Scripture is consistently a symbol of evil, whether doctrinal or practical (Matthew 16:11, 12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1; 1 Corinthians 5:8). It was excluded from the ancient meal-offering which so beautifully foreshadowed the holy person of Christ (Leviticus 2:11). It symbolizes the subtle, permeating power of tolerated evil. A woman introduces this forbidden ingredient into the loaf of pure meal. Once introduced, the corruption permeates the whole. We see the results of this in the way the original purity of apostolic Christianity has been corrupted by the distortions and traditions of men.

5. The Hidden Treasure (13:44)

The Lord now entered the house where He not only privately explained the second parable but told three additional ones—the parables of the Treasure, the Pearl, and the Drag Net. Given to the disciples only, it seems clear that these have a more limited application. The first four pictures the external view of the kingdom; the last three illustrate the internal side of things.

Two Old Testament texts liken Israel to God's treasure (Exodus 19:5; Psalm 135:4). The field is the world (v. 38). The purchaser who sells all is Christ. Prizing Israel so highly, and suffering the loss of everything when He died for her, the Lord purchased the whole world in order that eventually He might display Israel as His lustrous jewel in the earth. Meanwhile the glories of this people are hidden. At His glorious return He will prove that both the earth and the treasure are His, bought with His blood. (Note: Christ is not said to have *redeemed* the earth. In one sense all men are bought, though not all are redeemed, 2 Peter 2:1.)

6. The Pearl (13:45, 46)

Once again the Merchant is Christ, and the full price was paid at Calvary. The pearl, found in the dark depths of the sea, illustrates the Church, drawn from the waters of the Gentile sea (Revelation 17:15). *One* pearl indicates the unity of Christ's mystical body, and His evaluation of this is vividly seen in His self-sacrifice on its behalf. In contrast to Israel, whose present status is hidden, the Church is right now the joyous possession of the Purchaser. Israel will reflect His glory later in the Millennium but the Church glorifies Him even now.

7. The Drag Net (13:47-50)

This final parable almost looks like a repetition of the Wheat and the Tares parable. But God never exactly repeats Himself in Scripture. Also the sequence is important. The purchase and the hiding of Israel (The Treasure) is followed by the buying of the Pearl (The Church). The Drag Net suggests what will *follow* these two.

The sea suggests the lawless nations (Isaiah 57:20). The net, not drawn up until *full*, gathers of every kind both good and bad. The sorting takes place at the consummation of the age. The angelic severing does not take place at the Rapture of the saints, for then the Lord Himself will remove the just, and leave the wicked on the earth. Here the opposite takes place. The just are gathered for blessing, and the wicked are removed to perdition. It is evidently the preparing of the earth for millennial blessing.

After the Church age is over and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 is fulfilled, the "everlasting Gospel" (Revelation 14:6, 7) will be proclaimed among the previously unevangelized nations. Multitudes will be saved and enter Messiah's kingdom to share His reign over the earth (Revelation 7:9-17). The fishermen of that period will be the one hundred and forty four thousand Jewish evangelists mentioned in Revelation 7 (Matthew 24:14). When the Lord Jesus returns to the earth, His angels will execute His judgment on the wicked by completely removing them from the earth (Matthew

25:31-46; Psalm 37:9-11; Malachi 4:1-3).

Having concluded this amazing series of parables, the Lord declared that the understanding scribe is one who brings forth from his treasure-chest things new (such as the things He has just revealed) as well as things old (that is, truths from the earlier revelation of the Old Testament). The scribe of the old dispensation becomes the disciple of the new.

THE REJECTED LORD (13:53-58)

The Lord's Nazareth townsfolk were compelled to own His power and wisdom, but because they knew His lowly origin (His mother, Joseph, and the rest of the family) they chose to discredit Him rather than acknowledge that only the supernatural could explain Him. Their unbelief blinded their eyes, and the greatest of all Prophets took His place among all lesser prophets as "without honor" among His own people. Thus the shadow of the oncoming cross fell across Christ's pathway once more. Unbelief brought its own penalty. The true Messiah in their midst could do no more mighty works among them.

THE FALSE AND CRUEL KING (14:1-11)

Here is the story of two kings—Herod and the Lord Jesus. The cruelty of man's king is seen and the compassion of God's King. The heart of both is manifested by their words and deeds.

The Herod mentioned here was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. In his earlier days this Herod had been a secret admirer of John the Baptist, being persuaded that he was a righteous and a holy man. For at least some time this king was John's patron and protector (Mark 6:20, A.S.V.). But the early impressions faded and the restraints of conscience and the voice of truth were lost. The story is told now of Herod's conscience (v. 2), cowardice (vv. 5, 9), carnality (v. 6) and crime (v. 10).

Reports of Christ's fame awakened this man's conscience, and

superstition led him to conclude that John the Baptist, whom he had recently murdered, was actually back from the dead, and was displaying supernatural power. Frequently when men reject truth they fall to superstition.

Verses three to eleven seem to be a parenthesis, explaining the occasion for the king's uneasiness. Lust and passion were on the throne that night when the king made his reckless oath to Herodias' daughter. The trap had been cleverly baited, and Herod fell into it. He would have executed John much earlier, but his fear of public reaction prevented the crime. But now there was his promise to this evil girl, and because of his careless oath, his unwillingness to "lose face," he committed the greatest crime of his career. He passed the point of no return. Sometime later, when arraigned before this very Herod, Jesus Christ answered him nothing (Luke 23:8, 9). The last reference in the New Testament to this Herod is in Acts 4:27. Notice the significant word "against."

THE COMPASSION OF THE TRUE KING (14:12-14)

With devotion and courage John's disciples secured his headless corpse, laid it away, and then brought their breaking hearts to Jesus. The Lord did not denounce Herod for his foul deed, nor did He instigate a crusade against his wretched government. He had not come as a social reformer. He simply withdrew from the strife and turmoil to seek rest for Himself and His followers on the other side of the lake. But once there they are met by a vast crowd of people, many of whom had come by foot around the northern end of the lake. What a temptation to be irritated! Could He never get away from multitudes? Could He never have a little respite? Must He be *always* ministering to them? But there was no impatience; on the contrary, "Jesus went forth, and saw . . . and was moved with compassion."

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND (14:15-21)

This miracle is the only one common to all four Gospels. God would

draw our particular attention to it. Centuries earlier Jehovah had promised Israel to "satisfy her poor with bread" (Psalm 132:15). Surely this prophecy found at least a partial fulfillment in the action of Israel's Messiah right here.

Probably more than twenty thousand were present that day, for the men alone numbered five thousand. Having spoken to them of the Kingdom of God, and healed their sick (Luke 9:11), Jesus would not yield to the suggestion of His followers and dismiss the hungry crowd. On the contrary, He told them to feed them. When they pointed out the poverty of their supply, He told them to bring it to Him. He could have fed that throng *without* any basic supply. Then why request it? He wanted to teach an important lesson. Christ delights to take and to use what we have for the outworking of His purposes. Even though our resources may be pitiably small, if yielded to His omnipotent hand great results may be accomplished.

Taking the bread and the fishes, He blessed, brake and gave to the disciples, and the disciples in turn to the multitude. They did not supply the food; they simply served it. And if we are to serve the living bread to hungry and dying men and women today, we must first of all receive it from His bountiful hand. It comes from *Him* to *them* through *us.*

THE STILLING OF THE STORM (14:22-33)

If in the feeding of the five thousand we have a picture of what Jesus Christ is doing during the present age, then in the scene that follows we have a preview of Israel in the coming Tribulation ordeal.

Jesus had to "constrain" His followers to get into a ship and launch out for the opposite shore. They did not want to leave the crowds! But the Lord exercised His authority by dismissing both the disciples and the throng. So now at last He has some privacy. But how does He use it? Does He sleep? No, He uses it to commune on the hillside with His God.

This fascinating episode foreshadows the experience of the godly Jewish remnant in the coming hour of tribulation wrath. It also applies to us today. Jesus has gone on high to intercede for His own, and

although He often permits the storm to arise, He still sees us in our distress. But more than that: He comes to our rescue in our darkest hour (the fourth watch was between three and six in the morning). Christ's word and presence alone can bring relief and deliverance.

The well-known incident of Peter's walking on the water illustrates the true Church leaving the ship of Judaism and going forth at the call of Christ to be with Him. But we must not overlook the personal application. The life of faith is the life that walks on the water in obedience to the word of Christ. As long as Peter looked to his Lord, he walked safely, but taking his eyes off his Master, he looked at his circumstances and fear gripped his heart. Then down he went! The lesson is obvious. We must keep the eye of our heart on the mighty Christ at God's right hand, and off our circumstances, if we are to be overcoming Christians. The wind instantly ceased, and the waves became calm when they regained the ship. Moreover, they were immediately in the harbor (John 6:21). All storms, failures and fears will forever end when the Savior returns.

In his account Mark tells us that the disciples were "sore amazed . . . for they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened" (Mark 6:51, 52). On the other hand, Matthew tells us that they "worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." These two contrastive attitudes evidently divided the group on board; some were dumbfounded while others worshipped and confessed.

THE HEALING OF THE DISEASED (14:34-36)

If some of the disciples on board the ship that night were still in the grip of doubt, certainly the joyous populace of Gennesaret were not. Glad excitement spread rapidly, and before long the Lord Jesus was faced with many a diseased people. And not one went away unblessed or unhealed. Even a touch resulted in perfect health.

These three great miracles–the feeding of the multitude, the stilling of the storm and the healing of the sick–were God's authentication of the Messiah to Israel. Furthermore, they point up the great

prophetic program. In the feeding of the multitude we see the grace of God in providing spiritual bread for men today; in His coming to the rescue of His friends on the stormy lake we have a forecast of His return for the relief of the distressed Jewish remnant at the close of the Tribulation; and in His healing of all the diseased we look onward to that coming day when not an inhabitant of Jerusalem shall say, I am sick (Isaiah 33:24). Redeemed and restored Israel will then sing, "Bless the Lord . . . who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Psalm 103).

When you are ready, complete Exam 3 by answering questions 11-20 on pages 6/13-15. (You should have already answered questions 1-10 as part of your study of lesson 5.)

When you have answered all the questions in Exam 3, mail the exam for correction.

MATTHEW

Exam 3
Lessons 5, 6

Name _____ (print plainly) Exam Grade _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Class Number _____

Instructor _____

LESSON 5

In the blank space in the right-hand margin write the letter of the correct answer.

1. The Lord told the disciples to pray that laborers would be sent into the harvest field. Then the Lord
   a. sent them to the lost sheep of the house of Israel
   b. called twelve more disciples to do this work of itinerant evangelism
   c. revealed to them His plan for world evangelism during the present Church age
   d. went Himself to "the regions beyond" — a

2. The Lord, in commissioning His messengers in Matthew 10, told them
   a. to pay their expenses by manual labor
   b. to expect a warm welcome from everyone
   c. to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature
   d. to anticipate persecution and rejection — d

3. Matthew 10 is Jewish and dispensational in character. Therefore
   a. nothing in the chapter has any application to the Church
   b. everything in the chapter relates directly to modern missionary enterprise
   c. while its interpretation belongs to Israel, its application can be related to the Church
   d. its rules and regulations apply today only to the evangelism of the Jews — a

4. Four classes of people are introduced in Matthew 11. Of these "the cities" represent
   a. mass evangelism
   b. obdurate unbelief
   c. world evangelism
   d. indifference

   b

5. What was Jesus' answer to John the Baptist's doubts? He
   a. wrote an epistle to him
   b. smote Herod with blindness
   c. miraculously set John free
   d. pointed to the works He was performing

   d

6. Matthew 11 closes with
   a. a solemn warning
   b. a great invitation
   c. a spectacular miracle
   d. a home-spun parable

   b

7. When the Pharisees criticized the disciples for plucking grain on the Sabbath Jesus pointed them to an Old Testament passage. The incident to which He referred concerned
   a. the circumcision of children on the Sabbath day
   b. the offering of sacrifices on the Sabbath day
   c. the eating of the shewbread by David
   d. the gathering of manna by Israel

   c

8. On the first occasion, recorded by Matthew, of the religionists conspiring to kill Jesus, the Lord quoted a passage from Isaiah which spoke of
   a. His crucifixion
   b. the bringing of the Gentiles into blessing
   c. His virgin birth
   d. the destruction of Jerusalem

   b

9. The Lord Jesus referred to unbelieving Jewish officialdom as
   a. a nest of vipers
   b. a pack of wolves in sheep's clothing
   c. a broken reed
   d. a smoking flax

   a

10. Repentance for sin and faith in a person are exemplified in
a. Cain and Abel
b. David and Goliath
c. the Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba
d. the Greeks and the Romans

c

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What is your attitude towards the Lord Jesus?

The Lord Jesus is the Son of God. He is my Saviour. He is the greatest thing that could happen to any one

LESSON 6

In the blank space in the right-hand margin write the letter of the correct answer.

11. The Lord's first formal use of parables in Matthew shows their intent was to
a. reveal the truth more clearly
b. conceal the truth from everyone
c. make truth more interesting
d. make the truth clear to Christ's friends and enigmatic to His foes

d

12. The "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" have to do with
a. the theocratic nature of the kingdom
b. the form the kingdom assumes between the time of Christ's rejection and His return
c. the triumph of the gospel during this age
d. the ethnic limitation of the kingdom during the present age to true believers only

a

13. Those who hear the message and who have the seed snatched away by Satan are represented in the Lord's parable by
    a. the wayside soil
    b. the rocky soil
    c. the thorny soil
    d. the good soil

a

14. In the second parable, that of the wheat and the tares, the seed represents
    a. the Word of God
    b. the children of God
    c. the Christ of God
    d. the Church of God

b

15. The leaven represents
    a. the gospel gradually permeating all the earth in this age
    b. the false teachings of Islam which spread so rapidly in the Middle Ages
    c. the rise and spread of Communism as the great anti-God philosophy of the last days
    d. the subtle, spreading power of tolerated evil

d

16. Which of the following parables illustrated the Church? The parable of
    a. the mustard seed
    b. the hid treasure
    c. the pearl of great price
    d. the drag net

c

17. The Lord could do no great works in the town in which He had been raised because
    a. of the unbelief of the people of that town
    b. of travel restrictions which kept Him away from Nazareth
    c. His home town had been destroyed by an earthquake
    d. of the presence of a Roman garrison in Nazareth

a

18. Herod murdered John the Baptist because
    a. John posed a threat to the Herodian dynasty
    b. Herod hated him
    c. "saving face" was more important to Herod than saving faith
    d. John refused to join the Herodian party

c

19. Which miracle immediately followed the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand? The
a. raising of Lazarus
b. changing of water into wine
c. casting out of a demoniac legions of evil spirits
d. the walking on the water

d

20. What was the reaction of the disciples to Christ's stilling of the storm?
a. They were all amazed
b. They all worshipped Him
c. They were amazed at first and later worshipped Him
d. Some were amazed and some worshipped

b

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

1. What light does 2 Corinthians 4:3 shed on the Lord's use of parables in Matthew 13?

He used parables to reveal the truth to His people.

2. Is the Bible "an open book" to you or is it a closed book, one you cannot understand at all? Explain your answer.

The Bible is an open book. The more I study, the more I understand.

MAIL TO address shown on back outside cover.
PLEASE enclose a stamped addressed envelope for the return of your corrected exam.

Lesson Seven

The Kingdom, the Church and the Glory

(MATTHEW 15-17)

THE PRONOUNCEMENTS OF THE KING (Matthew 15, 16)

August Van Ryn points out that in chapter fifteen four hearts are placed in contrast—the heart of the religious hypocrite (vv. 1-8), the heart of depraved man in general (vv. 11-20), the heart of the Canaanite woman (vv. 21-28), and the heart of the compassionate Christ (vv. 29-31).

1. The Hypocrite's Heart (15:1-9)

The religionists in their triviality questioned Christ because His followers ate with unwashed hands. In reply Jesus shed the searchlight of truth on the whole question of human tradition, revealing the hollow pretensions of Phariseeism and, at the same time, what true defilement really is.

Mark's account (7:1-13) provides fuller details. Religious scruples prevented Jews from drinking from cups, eating from plates, or dining at tables without first purifying these vessels in case some heathen had just touched them and thus defiled them! Only ceremonial purification could remedy such a situation. In His answer, the Lord showed how they actually nullified the fifth Commandment. Their sophistry lay in raising a responsibility on the human level to the divine level in order to escape the obligation on the human level. God had commanded children to honor

their parents but the Jews argued that if the financial support involved in this should be channelled into the treasury of God instead, then the children would not only be discharged of their filial responsibility but would actually be praised for their devotion to God! For were they not putting God's interests first? The higher dedication would void the lower!

This sounded very pious but the net result was that the greedy priests of the temple got everything and the needy parents got nothing! The commandment of God was thus completely voided. No wonder the Lord Jesus branded these "play actors" as hypocrites! What a challenge to us! Have we introduced man-made regulations which in effect shield us from the plain requirements of God? True worship of God must be conditioned by simple obedience to His word. Human modifications of God's word, be they deletions or additions, only bring the indictment, "In vain do they worship me" (v. 9).

2. The Heart of Man (15:10-20)

The Jerusalem Jews who had raised the quibble over ceremonial defilement were miffed at the Lord's exposure of their hypocrisy. Some of the disciples seem to have been somewhat in sympathy with them. The Lord made no apology but pointed out instead that a new life and nature from God is required, not a mere patching up of the old. Each one must be planted from above. But these were clearly earthly plants, and blind guides and nothing but disaster lay ahead both for them and their followers.

The Lord next explained the difference between physical and moral defilement. It is not the physical intake but the moral output that corrupts. This latter flows from the heart (man's essential nature) which is vile indeed.

There is a deadly malignancy behind human misconduct. Man acts sinfully because he is sinful; the deadly poison in the well can not be purified by a fresh coat of paint on the pump! "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). "That which is born of the flesh is

flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:8).

3. The Canaanite's Heart (15:21-28)

Having exposed man's heart, the Son of God revealed His own. Jesus and His disciples had walked some twenty miles on this northern missionary trek into Gentile country. The Lord retired into a house on arrival to enjoy some privacy and rest, indicating something of His physical weariness (Mark 7:24). "But He could not be hid." For once again human need knocked on the door of His house and on the door of His heart.

The suppliant here was a Gentile and had no real claim on "the Son of David," for He bore this title only as Israel's Messiah-King. This explains His silence. Her desperate persistence awakened only the annoyance of the disciples, but it manifested the grace and truth that had come through Jesus Christ. He had been sent only to Israel's lost sheep. And she was not among these. Truth therefore shut her out. But what about grace? Ah, this was available to anyone on the ground of faith. When she cried, "Lord, help me," He explained that the bread rightfully belonged to the children of the covenant, and it would not be fitting to throw this to dogs, but the woman's response was amazing. She immediately took her place as a dog—an unclean one—and suggested that as such she could surely have a few crumbs! Here was true self-judgment and faith, and it brought instant action from the gracious Christ. She was blessed abundantly, and her daughter delivered from the demon. It has been remarked that she asked only for crumbs but Jesus gave her the whole loaf! The faith of this Gentile lies in sharp contrast with the unbelief of the Jewish religionists.

4. The Savior's Heart (15:29-31)

Mark's parallel account of this scene indicates that it took place in Decapolis, the District of the Ten Cities (Mark 7:31-37). It was throughout this area that the healed "Legion" had published, to

the astonishment of all who heard him, what great things the Lord Jesus had done for him (Mark 5:20). Was it because of this testimony that the attitude of the populace had been so completely reversed? (Contrast Mark 5:17 with ch. 7:31.) We like to think so. Their cold rejection had thawed, and become a warm welcome.

Faced with so much need, the King cured every case. They came in dumb silence and went away singing, came limping and they went away leaping, came sightless and they went away seeing. And there was much rejoicing and glory for Israel's God. Thus Christ's miracles accredited Him as the true Messiah, brought blessing to man, and were glorifying to God.

5. The Feeding of the Four Thousand (15:32-39)

Both Matthew and Mark (8:1-9) record this story, and in almost identical language. It holds several surprises.

First, we are rather shocked at the ready unbelief of the disciples, especially when not long before they had witnessed an even larger crowd miraculously fed by Christ (14:15-21). Another feature is that although the crowd was smaller by one thousand men the original resources were larger; there were seven loaves instead of five. Then, too, this time the fragments filled only seven baskets, whereas in the earlier miracle they had filled twelve. These details are not recorded without purpose. The crowd was attached to the Savior and had stayed with Him, hanging upon His words for three days, with no food whatever. Such interest could not be met by curt dismissal, for at least some of them might collapse of fatigue on the way home. So the Lord undertook to give them a satisfying meal, despite the bankruptcy of both the imagination and faith of His followers.

Perhaps a prophetic foreview is provided in this series of acts. The healing of the Gentile girl foreshadows Gospel blessing going out worldwide during this age. Following this God, manifested once again as "the God of Israel" (v. 31), will bless His ancient people both spiritually and physically. Then will be fulfilled Isaiah's great word, "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto

them that turn from transgression in Jacob" (Isaiah 59:20). And only then will Psalm 132:13-18 be completely fulfilled.

6. The Pharisees and Sadducees (16:1-4)

Having returned to Magdala the Lord was confronted with a joint demand by the Pharisees and Sadducees. These two Jewish parties were mutually hostile, but now they found common cause in their hostility to Christ.

The *Pharisees* (the name means "separatists") were a small but vocal sect of Judaism (Acts 15:5; 26:5). In this very chapter Jesus condemned their doctrine (v. 12) and elsewhere, their practices. Their doctrine, which He likened to leaven, was a form of teaching which professed loyalty to the Mosaic law, but which really undermined the law by adding human tradition to it. The external was more important to the Pharisees than the internal. Also they emphasized the minutiae of things ignoring weightier matters, such as judgment, mercy and faith. And beside all this, the Pharisees failed to practice their own precepts. Many were mere hypocrites. It was this that so angered the righteous Jesus throughout the Gospels. They said, but did not (23:3).

The *Sadducees,* on the other hand, were Israel's intelligentsia, including the priests (Acts 5:17). Their philosophy was thoroughly rationalistic. They were materialists rejecting the reality of angels, spirits or bodily resurrection (22:23; Mark 12:18; Acts 23:8). The Pharisees on the other hand were more orthodox.

The demand for a sign from heaven was intended to embarrass the Lord by asking the impossible. His enemies were trying to expose Him as an imposter but, of course, they failed. Well able to interpret the physical signs in the heavens, these men were blind to the portents of the spiritual heavens. The Christ who had already provided an abundance of signs of His messiahship would provide only one more—the sign of Jonah.

This was significant because Jonah had become a sign to the Ninevites (Luke 11:30). He had preached to them *as a resurrected man. That* prophet's experience foreshadowed *this* Prophet's death

and resurrection and would be a condemning sign to Christ's enemies. They would do to Him what Nineveh had *not* done to Jonah; they would kill Him. But He would return from the dead, demonstrating the wickedness of their verdict.

7. The Warning Against Ritualism and Rationalism (16:5-12)

Had the disciples been better acquainted with the Old Testament types, they would have recognized the significance of the leaven. For leaven, a secretly permeating and pervasive substance, was prohibited in the sacred offerings of Israel (Leviticus 2:11). It was typical of the subtle working of evil. Later on, Paul would use it as the symbol of "malice and wickedness" (1 Corinthians 5:6-8). The unchecked tolerance of a little evil would gradually permeate and corrupt the whole. Leaven is a consistent type of evil, whether doctrinal or moral (Galatians 5:9). Here it is the former: "he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (v. 12)—mere religious tradition and ritualism and rationalism and unbelief.

8. The Confession, the Church and the Commission (16:13-19)

This paragraph is of tremendous importance. Two of its significant features must not be overlooked—its *timing* and its *location.* The Lord Jesus was about to declare something new, but the announcement came only *after* Israel had officially rejected Him. The revelation of the Christian Church could be made only after the break with favored and elected Israel. Then, too, the place, Caesarea Philippi, is significant for this was Gentile territory. There is more than a hint here that the Church would not be essentially Jewish. The double name embraced Caesar and Herod, to both of whom Israel was then subject.

Against this double background Jesus asked His disciples the question that called forth Peter's glorious answer, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Both the full messiahship and deity of the Lord was now clearly declared. And unquestionably

Peter was here expressing not only his own personal faith, but that of his brethren as well. Peter indeed had received a special revelation from the Father in heaven; his was no expression of mere orthodoxy.

"On this rock," declared Christ, "I will build my church." What "rock"? Peter? Describing newly born babes in Christ, Peter later refuted the idea in his first epistle (see 1 Peter 2:4, 5). The term "stone" is applied here to both the Lord and His people. The Lord is God's "chosen" and "precious" foundation. Believers (including Peter himself), being of the same substance, are built upon Him. And the great rock on which the Church is founded is the basic truth of the messiahship and full deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. (See Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 10:4; Luke 6:48.) To deny this twin truth is to deny the faith.

For the first time the Lord here in Matthew 16 used the word "church." It means "a called out company" and signifies all, whether Jew or Gentile, who are to be called out of the world during this Gospel age to form the living house of God. As the builder Christ would use only living stones, those only who possessed the divine life. The building of this Church lay in the future. Pentecost would be its birthday.

In speaking of the impotence of Hades' gates the Lord was guaranteeing the Church's security, not its infallability. Hades is not the lake of fire, but the place of departed lost spirits between death and resurrection. The Lord guarantees that not one member, not one living stone, would ever pass through those gates. The gates of hades do prevail against every other human society, but every true Christian at death enters Paradise to be with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:1-8; Philippians 1:21-24; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; Revelation 20:6).

When Christ gave Peter "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" he was given neither the keys of heaven or of the Church. The *kingdom* of heaven is the sphere of Christian profession during the absence of the King, as we have seen in our study of the thirteenth chapter. Keys suggest authority to admit or to exclude, and this power was later committed also to the Church, or assembly (18:

17, 18; John 20:22, 23). Peter and his brethren were simply entrusted with the responsibility of administrating the kingdom in its present form by binding or loosing sins upon men according to their response or rejection of the authority of the absent King. The kingdom embraces *disciples* (13:52, A.S.V.) and these may be real or false, but at least they profess allegiance. The apostles preached the Gospel and thus made many disciples (Acts 14:21, A.S.V.).

The Christian today represents Christ his Lord and as such can proclaim forgiveness of sins or its opposite. In this way he retains or forgives–binds or looses them–*instrumentally*. In the final analysis only *God* can exercise the prerogative, but He uses His servants to disciple men into His kingdom by the Gospel. In just the same way does the Gospel preacher "save" men (1 Corinthians 7:16; 1 Corinthians 9:22).

9. The New Charge and the Impending Cross (16:20-23)

From this point onward our Lord forbade His followers to proclaim Him as Messiah. Israel had missed her opportunity. Having been branded by the Jews as a demon-possessed imposter, Jesus would not further press His claim.

And now, for the first time, the King announced the consummation of His rejection by Israel and its startling sequel–He would be executed, but He would rise again after three days. Notice the word "must" (v. 21). Right on the heels of the announcement of the Church comes the announcement of the cross and the resurrection. There could be no Church until sin was forever put away, the great Redeemer raised from the dead and glorified, and the Holy Spirit come from heaven to form it.

But this forecast of suffering was too much for Peter. Such a violent death might be appropriate for criminals, but not for his Lord! So he suggested that the Lord dismiss the thought altogether. This evoked the Master's rebuke for Christ recognized that the whole thought had arisen from a sinister source. The very apostle who had been the mouthpiece of the Father just a little

earlier had now unwittingly become the mouthpiece of the Devil! (Contrast v. 17 with v. 23.) What appeared to be a perfectly human sentiment was actually the attempt of Satan to turn the Lord Jesus aside from the very work that He had come to accomplish. How often a diabolical ambush may lurk behind an apparently innocent remark!

10. The Present Suffering and the Future Reward (16:24-28)

Jesus had just announced that His would be a path of suffering leading to a shameful death. Now He announced that His followers must expect to walk the same path. They too must bear a cross. They too must deny self. They too must be prepared to lose their lives. But in so losing these lives they would really find them. But they must lose them for *His* sake. We cannot attain success now, by the world's standards, and be a true success by eternity's standards too. If we amass wealth in this life we will be naked and poor in the next. On the other hand, if we renounce self and self's interests now for Christ's sake and glory, then we will be richly rewarded when the Son of Man returns.

The last verse of this chapter refers to the transfiguration scene that follows in the succeeding chapter, the "some" being Peter, James and John. The glorious experience of these three provide a sample of the reward He has just promised.

THE PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM (Matthew 17)

The announcement made by our Lord in the closing verse of the previous chapter was fulfilled in the Transfiguration. Peter later referred to this incident as being "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:16-18). Here we have a clear picture of Christ's future kingdom glories. According to Mark, it was "the kingdom of God come with power" (9:1), and Luke describes it simply as "the kingdom of God" (9:27). John omits the account entirely, for his Gospel unveils Christ's intrinsic (not acquired) glory as the only-begotten Son (1:14).

This glimpse of the kingdom has nothing to do with the present day Christian Church. It refers to Christ's future earth-wide administration. The present kingdom is that of God's Son (Colossians 1:13); the future aspect is that of the wider title—the Son of Man. Nor should we conclude because the term "vision" (v. 9) is used that it was an unreal dream. The word means "what they had seen."

1. The Transfiguration (17:1-8)

Once again Peter, James and John were chosen, this being one of three occasions when they were privileged to gaze on their Master's power, glory or sufferings (Mark 5:37; Matthew 17:1; Matthew 26:37). They formed an inner circle, a fact which should cause me to ask, Am I one of the Lord's intimates? Does He grant me personal revelations of His glory?

The transfiguration was really the outshining of the intrinsic and divine glory of the Lord Jesus through the veil of His flesh. With face radiant as the sun, His very clothing as bright as the light, He was temporarily glorified. Associated with Him in this glory were Moses and Elijah who represented the Law and the Prophets. Matthew does not tell us, as does Luke, that the subject of their conversation was Christ's "decease which He should accomplish in Jerusalem," for Matthew ever has in view His *regal* glory.

How Peter and his friends recognized Moses and Elijah is unexplained, but it is clear that in the coming glory the saints will lose neither their identity nor individuality. They will continue to be what they are in themselves, though inhabiting bodies of glory.

We should be thankful for Peter's inappropriate remark, for it brought the bright cloud and the Father's voice commending afresh His beloved Son. When Peter quoted these words years later, in his second epistle, he omitted "hear ye him." Was he thus implying that these words were directed primarily to him, and he had since profited by them? (2 Peter 1:17). The "bright cloud" was the visible presence of Jehovah (the Shekinah cloud) which had accompanied Israel throughout their forty year desert pilgrimage (Exodus 13:21, 22; 33:9; 1 Kings 8:10).

Pondering the entire scene, who can doubt the unique person, position and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ? No wonder that Peter later refers to having been one of the "eye-witnesses of his majesty." And the picture is perfect. The true king is glorified. The dead in Christ, now raised and clothed with His likeness, are represented by Moses. The living saints, "changed" and "caught up" (1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18) are pictured by Elijah who was raptured to heaven without dying (2 Kings 2:11). Peter, James and John may typify the place of Israel on earth in the coming kingdom, for Israel will be the administrator of Christ's government (Isaiah 60). The glorified ones will occupy the heavenly side of the millennial kingdom, while those who are not glorified will occupy the earthly side.

2. The Explanation Concerning Elijah's Coming (17:9-13)

After the vision and voice comes the valley. Moses and Elijah returned to the glory, but Jesus accompanied His own down into the valley—a path that led eventually to Calvary. He must die! After His resurrection the disciples could tell of their experience, but not before. Israel had already rejected its King. No further light as to His person (16:20) nor glory would be given.

The Scribes were correct in looking for Elijah to appear before the Messiah came. The Lord confirmed this (v. 11). E. W. Rogers well says, "This passage gives us an important clue as to the interpretation of prophecy, i.e. that it may have two fulfillments, the one within the other. Had they received John, this prophecy would have been fulfilled for he filled the role of Elias in whose spirit he came. But since they did not receive him, the prophecy still awaits its final fulfillment when Elijah will himself actually precede the Messiah ere He brings in His millennial kingdom."

3. The Expulsion of the Stubborn Demon (17:14-21)

The Son of God came down from the height to the depth to serve

as Deliverer. It is surprising that, although the disciples had been given power to exorcize demons (10:1), they were helpless in this particular case. By designating "this kind," the Lord clearly indicated that there are different levels of demoniac wickedness and malignity. Evidently some unclean spirits are vile and cruel, while others are refined and even religious. The latter actually teach religious doctrines (1 Timothy 4:1).

Confronted by the case, the Lord Jesus commanded that the victim be brought to Him, and at His word of rebuke the wicked spirit resisted in one final act of violence, and then vacated.

Jesus gave the disciples the reasons for their failure. They had yielded to disbelief. Moreover this obstinate demon could be expelled only by waiting upon God and by fasting. Faith, prayer and self-denial are rugged Christian virtues that move the Almighty on our behalf. They are all too rare today.

4. The Forecast of Tragedy and Triumph (17:22, 23)

Christ as Son of Man had already provided a preview of His coming kingdom glory. Now again He foretold His betrayal, death and resurrection. His sufferings must precede His glory. And the unintelligent grief that filled the disciples would ultimately turn to unspeakable joy.

5. The King Waives His Rights (17:24-27)

Returning to His home town of Capernaum, the question of Christ's loyalty to the temple obligations was now raised by the tax officials. Being challenged in the absence of his Master, Peter assured the collectors that Jesus did pay the tax. Doubtless he considered his answer to be one of loyalty and defense. But unwittingly he was doing Christ a dishonor. Had Peter so quickly forgotten the significance of the transfiguration? Was his Master not heaven's King whose commands were instantly obeyed by winds, waves, disease and demons? Was the Jerusalem temple not His "Father's house," and was He not the divine Son? If so, then

what claim did such a tax have on *Him?*

Peter would soon be reminded of this glory, however, for on entering the house, his Master anticipated (this is the meaning of the old English word "prevent," v. 25) him and showed that He already knew the details of the conversation outside. In this incident Christ displayed His divine omniscience.

Did kings collect taxes of citizens or of strangers? Of strangers, of course. Then, argued Jesus, the citizens are exempt. The obvious significance of this was that He was under no obligation whatever. To suggest otherwise was an insult. The King, however, would waive His right and pay the tax. In other words, both He and Peter would be strangers in the King's own realm.

But how would He pay? Apparently He had no money. Centuries earlier the Psalmist had declared, "The sea is his, and he made it" (Psalm 95:5). Galilee therefore was His lake, and all of its fish. He was the Lord of all creation still, though veiled in human guise. Hence Peter was commanded to throw in a hook; a fish bearing in its mouth the exact coin is ordered to bite that hook, and the coin would take care of the tax for both of them.

Note the Lord Jesus did not say that the coin would suffice "for us," but rather "for me and thee." Thus He indicated both distinction and yet association.

When you have mastered this lesson, take the first part of Exam 4 (covering lesson 7), questions 1-10 on pages 8/13-14 (right after lesson 8). Remember, you will not turn this exam in for correction until after you have done lesson 8.

Lesson Eight

The Personnel of the Kingdom

(MATTHEW 18, 19)

The opening words of chapter 18, "At the same time," connect what follows with the incident of the tribute money. The A.S.V. is more specific, reading, "In that hour." The disciples were still very kingdom-conscious. If their Lord was a stranger on earth, He nevertheless had a kingdom of *heaven* and their burning concern was their place in it.

THE GREATNESS OF LITTLENESS (18:1-14)

This section is the charter for the evangelism of children. It tells of the status of children in relation to God. While it is customary for us to urge children to emulate adults, the Savior commands adults to emulate children. These pronouncements are of the highest importance for the Christian parent, Sunday school teacher, and all who have the spiritual interest of youngsters at heart.

The section is introduced by the question concerning the qualifications for greatness in the kingdom. It is probable that the inquiry had been provoked by the recent prominence accorded Peter, James and John (16:18, 19; 17:1). Mark explains that a dispute had arisen among Christ's followers "by the way," and on arrival at "the house" in Capernaum, the Master questioned them about it. Their question is explicitly stated in verse 1.

How startled they must have been to watch Him as He placed a child in the midst of their circle. This child's humble and immediate

obedience became a lesson. The Lord announced that before anyone could be great in heaven's kingdom, he must necessarily enter it, and the one requirement for entrance is to be turned, or be converted, to God. This was another way of emphasizing the need for the new birth. The adult must become, not childish, but child-like. This quality is the opposite of self-assertiveness, which is so prominent in man's kingdom.

Notice the recurrence of the phrase "little child," or "little one" (vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 14). Such is a believer on Christ (v. 6), so precious to God that those who offend such would be better dead.

In verse 7 the Lord pronounced a double woe. Stumbling blocks are unavoidable in a world of sin for they are among its necessary consequences. But this in no way releases the offender from guilt. Such an offender comes under the divine "woe." Blind leaders who lead their blind followers into the ditch will not only perish themselves, but will be eternally castigated by those they have deceived. Christless and world-loving parents who turn aside their children from God's holy ways will not escape condemnation.

Up to this point Jesus has been warning against the stumbling of others. In verses 8 and 9 He warns us against permitting the members of our own bodies to stumble *us*. Notice the words, "offend thee." He was not recommending literal self-mutilation; rather, He was using symbolic language. The hand suggests one's activity or occupation; the foot, the walk that leads to destiny; the eye, both motive and goal of life. The word "life" suggests eternal destiny but it might also apply to the present life, "life indeed" as suggested by 1 Timothy 6:19.

Christ is not speaking in verse 10 of the condition after death but of that which is true right now. Each child now has his own representative angel before the Father's face (notice the words "their angels") which represents him before the throne and which is charged with that child's highest welfare. He carries out the behests of the Father on behalf of the child (Psalms 34:7; 91:11, 12; Hebrews 1:14). This is one reason why a child must not be despised or looked down upon. The second reason is that the Savior's love for the child took Him all the way to Calvary. Jesus did not die for angels; He died for children (v. 11). These two significant facts clothe the little child with tremendous

dignity. No wonder that "theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." And no wonder that the warning against offense is couched in such solemn language.

The parable that follows verses 12 and 13 is not a repetition of the one of Luke 15. The circumstances are quite different. The ninety and nine *there* are the righteous religionists; but *here* they seem to apply to the angels. Though lost by nature, Christ's death has made the little ones safe. Christ's grace brought Him to the cross on their behalf, resulting in His finding them. Because of this they are represented in Heaven by *their* own angels, and are in the Kingdom now (19:14). Such children enjoy a greater dignity even than the unfallen angels!

Verse 14 is the climax! No little child, whatever his race or background, can ever perish. This declaration glorifies God in the whole matter of infant mortality.

QUARRELS AMONG BRETHREN (18:15-20)

The Lord now passes on to the remedy for the quarrels among Christian brethren. It is no longer "this little child" but "thy brother."

The offended one must take the initiative and go to the brother who has been the offender. In chapter 5:23, 24, we have the other side of the coin: "thy brother hath ought against *thee*." In this case, you are the offender! But in either situation, whether injured or injurer, you must go to the other party and seek reconciliation. If this injunction were seriously observed among Christians today, what healing of long standing breaches would result! Unfortunately stubbornness and pride frequently cause us to take the "let-him-come-to-me-first" attitude.

There are three clear steps for reconciliation. First, a private visit is commanded. If this approach fails, a small group of witnesses must be taken along. As a last resort, the matter must be laid before the congregation of believers who must judge the offender. While the sin must not be glossed over, the clear object should be the restoration of the offending brother.

This passage contains Christ's second mention of the Church. The first reference (16:18) concerned the Church universal, while here the

reference is to the Church local. The order is significant. There can be no clear scriptural understanding of the local Church if there is clouded thinking about the universal Church.

The approach to the offending Christian must be one of patience and thoroughness. The idea of witnesses, in the event of failure in the initial private visit, is to secure oneself against misrepresentation, and also to secure a hearing of both sides of the quarrel. Often misquotations and misunderstandings lie at the root of strained relations and differences.

Failure in the first two steps inevitably involves the local assembly. This is the last movement in the sad affair, not the first! The offender should now be regarded by the offended brother (note the singular "thee") as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer. It is significant that Matthew, who had formerly himself been a tax-gatherer, and hence knew something of the reproach attached to this office, records this solemn sentence.

While the "thee" of verse 17 is singular, the "ye" of verse 18 is plural, referring obviously to the assembly. Church actions on earth, if righteous, are ratified in heaven. This fact lends a holy, awesome dignity to the local company, even if it consists of only two or three who gather in the name of Jesus. It is not simply their pronouncement that clothes the sentence with such solemn importance, but rather the presence of Christ in the midst. It is by His authority that the Church gathers, and because of the authority of His name, the verdict is owned by God above. The local Church, truly acknowledging the full lordship of Jesus, is the final court of appeal. The binding concerns the permanent sealing of the trespass upon the unrepentant brother, just as the loosing suggests his forgiveness.

The spiritual authority, originally committed to Peter (16:19), is now committed to the local Church (compare John 20:23). Thus it is clear that this authority goes far beyond "apostolic succession."

The nineteenth verse is tied to the twentieth by the little word "for." Here are two or three burdened souls gathered together, in Jesus' name, to pray for some "agreed" matter. The word "agree" means more than just a common and casual arrangement between a couple of Christians. It is literally "symphonize," and refers to hearts that are exercised

with the same burden before God about a specific need. The Spirit burdens two Christians, perhaps miles apart, about some precise matter and they beseech God concerning it. This is really "praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20), and therefore the answer is fully guaranteed by the Lord's "it shall be done for them" (v. 19). He is in the very midst by His Spirit, giving validity and authority to their supplications.

FORGIVENESS (18:21-35)

Peter wanted to know how extensive a long-suffering attitude should be. Should an offender be forgiven as many as seven times? The Lord's astonishing answer indicated that there is no limit to forgiveness. Seventy times seven proclaims a forgiveness that is infinite.

Next, the Lord told a startling parable which seems to conflict with the grace of God that forgives eternally and unconditionally. Obviously, the pardon envisioned in this story was provisional. Because the forgiven servant turned out to be unforgiving, his own forgiveness was rescinded. How are we to understand this? Is this how God pardons us today—making His grace dependent upon our subsequent conduct?

Any interpretation of the parable must be consistent with the general application made by the Lord in the last verses of the chapter. The full force of that application has to do with "you" in relation to your "brother." In other words, it has a forceful bearing on our welfare for both today and tomorrow.

Now note that this parable concerns the Kingdom of Heaven, a sphere which includes both Christian reality and unreality. The participants are human beings and act according to human principles. Hence we must not seek in each detail a pattern of the dealings of God. These human attitudes reflect the procedures that sometimes prevail between men.

The story deals with the pardon of a reprobate servant on the ground of the creditor-king's compassion and with the wickedness (v. 32) of that same servant in his heartless attitude toward his fellow. Finally, the story deals with the rescinding of the original pardon with resultant consequences. The wicked servant had undergone no change

of heart. His creditor's grace had not awakened any responsive mercy as his brutal attitude proved.

To what extent does this affect contemporary Christian society? Again let us note that our Lord does make a pointed application in His words, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (v. 35). It is clear, therefore, that there is a *sense* in which His forgiveness depends upon ours, and if ours is withheld, His will be suspended. But in what sense could this be?

Scripture presents *two* aspects of forgiveness, one having to do with eternity, and the other with time. Eternal forgiveness is an eternal, bona fide pardon from a holy God to the sinner who repents and believes on Jesus, based, of course, on the precious blood of Christ. This irrevocable blessing is secured through faith in the Savior (Luke 24:47; Acts 10:43; 13:38, 39; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 10:17). Because of the "name's sake" of the Lord Jesus, all the "little children" of the divine family now enjoy this full and eternal forgiveness of their trespasses (1 John 2:12). This remission will never be recalled.

There is, however, another side of this truth having to do with the *earth* and with the temporal. In this life, here and now, God governs His own family, decreeing that all sowing brings its own harvest. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:8). This law applies to Christians, as well as to sinners, and relates to this life. And it is in connection with this that conditional forgiveness applies. Earthly, temporal pardon depends on the believer's attitude toward his fellow-believer. If he proves to be obdurate and mean, his heavenly Father will deal with him accordingly. He is forgiven his trespasses in the measure that he forgives them who have trespassed against him. Many an unmerciful Christian has thus forfeited heavenly mercy to himself.

MARRIAGE (19:1-12)

Moving southward toward Judaea, the Lord made His approach through

Perea, somewhat wild country east of the Jordan. There the crowds continued to throng Him, and even though their motives were probably selfish, Jesus' concern continued undiminished. He healed them there. Not one case proved too difficult, not one was turned away.

The Pharisees now approached Christ with a "loaded" question. The insincerity of their motive is bared by the two words, "tempting him" (v. 3). Their aim was to publicly discredit the Teacher. The two rival schools of Hillel and Shammai divided public opinion on the subject of divorce. The Pharisees thought to get Christ caught up in the controversy. And so the question was asked, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"

The Lord Jesus did not plead for time to consider the subject, nor did He waver. He by-passed both schools and went directly to the heart of the question by citing the facts of man's original creation. By returning to origins He was on perfectly safe ground. Twice referring to "the beginning" (vv. 4, 8), Christ strongly supported monogamy and condemned polygamy and divorce.

He attributed the words, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh" (v. 5) to *God* ("he which made them . . . said"), but in their original context they came from the lips of Adam (Genesis 2:23, 24). Man, being then unfallen, spoke the mind of his God accurately. At that time no sin beclouded his thoughts. The answer then to the test of a divorce was that this constitutes a breach of the divine mind.

But the critics at once summoned the aid of Moses. Had he not commanded that under certain circumstances a divorce might be granted? The answer was that Moses did not *command;* he simply *permitted,* and did this only because of the hardness of their hearts. This very hardness of heart which caused them to put away their wives would shortly cause them to put away their Messiah!

Furthermore, the ground of Moses' concession was not adultery, but some less serious offense (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). The A.V. employs the word "uncleanness," the R.S.V. "indecency," and Moffatt translates "immodest in some way" for the sin of adultery was a capital crime, punishable by death (Deuteronomy 22:22). Moses' "writing of divorcement" therefore was a temporary expedient because of spiritual

callousness, and in no sense represented a change of intent on God's part. Thus Moses, instead of condemning the Lord, actually condemned *them* (compare John 5:45-47).

Now again the Lord solemnly taught the binding effect of the marriage relation. He had done so once before (Matthew 5:31, 32). The marriage relation antedates Christianity, Judaism and even the entrance of sin. It is *human* in its essential character and was "instituted in the time of man's innocence." Hence divorce is permissible only on the ground of fornication—a term which here is probably equivalent to adultery. The law of Moses called for death for adultery, but the law of Christ's kingdom permits dissolution of the marriage relation instead for this sin.

The disciples thought that with such a rigid restriction on marriage it would be best for a man to remain single. The Lord answered that the single state is exceptional, even though there are three classes of men who never marry.

ADULTS REBUKED; CHILDREN ENCOURAGED (19:13-15)

The disciples had indirectly supported the Pharisees over the divorce question (v. 10). Now they showed how completely out of harmony they were with their Master's mind in rebuking mothers who brought their babes to Him. Perhaps their attitude was born out of a sense of loyalty, perhaps even a selfish possessiveness or perhaps they felt that such an interruption would annoy Jesus, being too trifling for Him. But they were wrong. In fact, the Master was "much displeased" (Mark 10:14), and rebuked the rebukers.

Christ had already spoken about the importance of children (Matthew 18:1-14), but evidently His followers had not paid much attention. So now He not only reproved them, and by so doing justified the believing mothers who brought the little ones, but He added a further lesson. The spirit of the little child is the spirit of His kingdom; therefore little children are to be recognized as members of it. How unthinkable therefore that they should not be welcome to come to Him. Luke describes these little ones as "babes" (18:15, A.S.V.), adding that unless

an adult is prepared to receive the authority of God over his life he simply cannot be a part of that kingdom. All of this dignifies the child-like faith that unquestionably believes the pronouncements of God.

THE POVERTY OF THE RICH (19:16-22)

This story is included in both Mark's and Luke's Gospel. The three accounts should be considered together and the differences observed.

The inquirer had conspicuous advantages. He was young, sincere and religious. (The term "ruler" suggests that he was probably a member of the great Sanhedrin, or high Jewish Council.) Best of all, he had lived a clean moral life. None of his associates could point a finger at him. Conscious, however, of an inner lack, he put the question, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Our Lord's reply was direct (v. 17). What did He mean? Was He disclaiming deity? Certainly not, for this is exactly what He did claim. The man had recognized Him only as a good human teacher. Christ pointed out that if He was only human He could not possibly be good, for all men are sinners. The only one who is "good" in the absolute sense is God. In other words, if Jesus were not God, then He were not good. But because He was divine He could speak with authority. Jesus took up this religious man on his own ground and pointed him to the Law of Moses. This man wanted to do something for salvation but had no awareness of his lost condition. Because "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20) he should go to Sinai that his true condition could be manifested.

In the list of commands, really a series of tests, Jesus included one which summarized man's obligation to man, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," to expose to this man his own true need. He claimed to have kept the entire law. But if he really loved his neighbor as himself he would have no objection to liquidating his assets and giving his money to the needy around him. Nor would he object to come and follow the Christ who Himself had renounced all riches in order to eternally bless men (2 Corinthians 8:9). No further word was heard from this young religionist, but his action demonstrated his true

condition. The law had done its work, putting its finger on the very root of sin, namely covetousness. He *loved* his wealth. It had his heart. And the verdict had been so accurate that it had brought both embarrassment and disappointment. Sadly he turned his back on the light and disappeared. "He was very sorrowful: for he was very rich" (Luke 18:23).

THE POOR RICH CONTRASTED WITH THE RICH POOR (19:23-30)

The retreating figure of the disappointed young ruler caused the Lord to speak of the impossibility of one who trusts in his riches to enter God's kingdom. It is not impossible for a rich man to be a child of God; but it is impossible for those who "trust in riches" (Mark 10:24)—as impossible as it is for a camel to pass through a needle's eye. Moreover, one who is rich will "hardly," or with difficulty, be saved. The reason for this is that wealth blinds one's eyes to the fact of spiritual bankruptcy. "The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:10).

The disciples were amazed at their Lord's teaching. Mark especially dwells on their astonishment (Mark 10:24, 26). Jesus' pronouncement was the very reverse of the Old Testament principle. Under the law material prosperity was a mark of the divine favor. In other words, the spiritual Jew would be a wealthy Jew (Deuteronomy 28:1-14). But now a great change was impending, and the day was about to dawn when the spiritual man might be among the poorest in earthly possessions. Riches are not only valueless for salvation but a positive hindrance. The disciples asked in dismay, "Who then can be saved?" The answer was emphatic; no one can be saved on the ground of merit whatever. "But with God"—well, this is another matter. He only can save men, and on the ground of grace alone.

Behind Peter's question (v. 27) "What shall we have therefore?" lay the claim that he and his fellow-disciples had done exactly what the rich young ruler had refused to do, namely, leave all and follow Jesus. Although the question betrayed a selfish and mercenary spirit, the Lord

did not reprove him. On the contrary, He gave them all an exciting glimpse of the future. The Twelve will one day sit on twelve thrones judging Israel's twelve tribes. This will become effective in "the regeneration," the coming period when Christ as "son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory." The millennial earth is here envisaged, not heaven. During the millennial age the administration of the kingdom will be through the twelve tribes and each of these in turn will be assigned to one of the twelve apostles.

The promise that follows (v. 29) has a very real application to the present as well as to the future. Untold numbers of Christians have proven it true, for the strongest of spiritual bonds exists between the true people of God. And the inheriting of eternal life looks on to the day when it will be enjoyed in its fulness throughout eternity.

When you are ready, complete Exam 4 by answering questions 11-20 on pages 8/15-17. (You should have already answered questions 1-10 as part of your study of lesson 7.)

When you have answered all the questions in Exam 4, mail the exam for correction.

MATTHEW

Exam 4
Lessons 7, 8

Name_____ (print plainly) Exam Grade_____

Address _____

City_____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Class Number _____

Instructor _____

LESSON 7

In the blank space in the right-hand margin write the letter of the correct answer.

1. How did the religious Jews of Jesus' day circumvent the Mosaic commandment involving support of aged parents? By
a. denying that such a commandment was ever given
b. denying that the 5th commandment implied supporting enfeebled parents
c. pointing to the 6th commandment as annulling the 5th commandment
d. giving to the treasury of God the money which might have been used to support a parent

d

2. Which of the following corrupts a man?
a. falling asleep in church
b. eating food forbidden by the Levitical code
c. using bad language
d. using make-up

c

3. The Lord was silent at first when the Canaanite woman appealed to Him for aid because
a. she was a Gentile and He was a Jew
b. she appealed to Him as "Son of David"
c. she was a notorious sinner
d. she should have approached Him through the disciples

a

4. Which of the following would automatically identify a person as a Pharisee in the New Testament use of the word?
   a. intellectualism
   b. rationalism
   c. orthodoxy and hypocrisy
   d. heresy

   a

5. The *leaven* of the Pharisees was their
   a. doctrine
   b. morals
   c. zeal
   d. compromise

   a

6. The rock on which the Church is built is
   a. Simon Peter
   b. **all the apostles**
   c. the Messiahship and Deity of Christ
   d. the Old Testament Scriptures

   c

7. The Lord first announced His coming crucifixion right after
   a. He fed the five thousand
   b. His transfiguration
   c. His triumphal entry into Jerusalem
   d. the death of John the Baptist
   e. Simon Peter's confession

   e

8. Who were present at the transfiguration?
   a. Peter, James and John
   b. all the apostles
   c. Moses and Elisha
   d. Enoch and Elijah

   a

9. In the transfiguration scene the disciples represent
   a. the dead in Christ raised at His return
   b. the raptured saints caught up alive to be with the Lord at His return
   c. Israel during Christ's reign on earth in power and glory
   d. the unbelieving multitude shut out from the kingdom

   c

10. How did the Lord Jesus give up His rights in Matthew 17? By
   a. washing the disciples' feet
   b. paying the temple tax
   c. refusing to accept worship from the disciples
   d. doing all of the above

   b

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What has been most helpful to you in your study of this lesson?

I like what Chapter 17 says about the future. it is interesting the way God shows us what is going to happen to in the future.

LESSON 8

In the blank space in the right-hand margin write the letter of the correct answer.

11. The teaching of Matthew 18 seems to have arisen out of
a. the growing antagonism of the leaders of Israel
b. a dispute the twelve had been having amongst themselves
c. a question put to the Lord by the followers of John the Baptist
d. the recent feeding of the five thousand — a

12. Which of the following is true of little children?
a. They become angels if they die in childhood
b. They will be lost if they die without being baptized
c. Each has his own representative angel
d. The Lord admonishes them to emulate adults — d

13. The third step in seeking reconciliation with a brother is to
a. go to him alone
b. visit him with a small group of fellow believers
c. bring the difference before the entire congregation of believers
d. sue him in a court of law — C

14. Matthew 18:18 clearly teaches that the spiritual authority to "bind and loose" invested in Peter (16:19)
a. was for Peter alone
b. **has now been invested in a special group of religious leaders**
c. is now invested in the local church
d. **is now invested in only one denomination** — C

15. In answer to Peter's question about forgiving a brother the Lord indicated that

a. there is a limit to forgiveness
b. we ought to forgive someone just seven times
c. we must keep track of the number of times we forgive a person to make sure it comes to 490 times (70 x 7)
d. forgiveness knows no limit

d

16. The Lord's parable about the unmerciful servant who was forgiven and whose forgiveness was later rescinded teaches that

a. all forgiveness is conditional upon subsequent good behavior
b. we can be saved and lost
c. earthly pardon depends on our attitude to others
d. a person cannot be saved until he has first put right all the wrong things he has done

a

17. The "loaded question" the Pharisees put to the Lord Jesus in Matthew 19 had to do with

a. military service
b. divorce and remarriage
c. civil disobedience
d. equality of the sexes
e. the rights of minorities

b

18. How did the disciples prove themselves to be out of harmony with the mind of Christ? By

a. trying to proclaim Him King
b. urging Him not to go up to Jerusalem
c. eating bread with unwashed hands
d. rebuking the mothers who brought their little ones to Jesus

d

19. The rich young ruler

a. had kept all the ten commandments
b. did not love his neighbor as he loved himself although he thought he did
c. gladly sold all that he had to follow Jesus
d. gave away some of his money but kept the rest for himself

b

20. What is the (a) root of all (all kinds of) evil?

a. money
b. the love of money
c. the lack of money
d. none of the above

b

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

How forgiving are you?

I am aware of what Jesus said in matt 6: 14-15. God has been good to me. He forgave me and I can forgive others.

MAIL TO address shown on back outside cover.
PLEASE enclose a stamped addressed envelope for the return of your corrected exam.

Lesson Nine

The Predictions of the King

(MATTHEW 20-22)

THE BARGAINERS VERSUS THE TRUSTERS (20:1-16)

This parable illustrates the Lord's maxim, twice repeated here (19:30; 20:16), concerning the first being last, and the last first. We must not press all the details into service, for to do so may easily lead us into error. Salvation is not in view for then the children of God are but hirelings and this would overthrow the whole Gospel of grace. Nor was the Lord teaching that all the rewards for service is on one level, for the whole weight of Scripture, including this parable itself, is against this.

The chapter division obscures the connection between this parable and the Lord's great statement at the end of chapter 19. There the Lord approved the motive that led men to forsake all; they did it for Him and for His name's sake (19:28, 29), and not for mere reward. Casting themselves entirely upon Christ, they took this tremendous step of self-denial. By putting Him first, they put themselves last. So then this parable envisages two great underlying and contrastive principles of service. Is it to be by agreed contract or by a trustful confidence in the Lord apart from a business understanding? The word "agreed" in verse 2 implies a clearly understood contract. It was to be so much work for so much pay. But with the employees who were engaged at later hours there were no contractual arrangements. These evidently knew the master sufficiently well to serve him in loving confidence. At his suggestion they trust his grace, entering upon the work with unquestioning

faith. The sequel in which justice kept the agreement with the first group but graciously overpaid the later groups, demonstrates the importance of proper motives in the service of Christ. The first class of employees served for pay; the others served because they knew and loved the master. Our rewards in the Kingdom of Heaven will be according to these standards, and many that have seemed to be last will actually be first in that day. Conversely, many that are first will be last. God is not fond of bargaining, but His boundless grace generously responds to those who serve only because they love Christ.

AN AMAZING PROPHETIC CLOSE-UP (20:17-19)

The Lord Jesus now began the ascent to Jerusalem, and in this last journey of His, He deliberately led the way. "Jesus went before them," reports Mark. Sensing the gathering storm, the Twelve were both amazed and fearful as they followed. Then Christ made an astonishing and precisely detailed prediction. Only one who possessed divine omniscience could have uttered it. An imposter might guess the future in broad generalities making sufficient latitude for error, but this Speaker spelled out the immediate future with such detailed precision that if the after events failed to materialize He would have been forever discredited. There are seven parts to this prophecy. Jesus foretold *where* He would die, *how* He would die, and *by whom* He would die, and He would rise again on the third day. Not the smallest detail failed of fulfillment.

THE ROAD TO RULE IS THROUGH SERVICE (20:20-28)

The ambitious request of James' and John's mother was probably prompted by the Lord's promise in chapter 19:28. Although Mark sees the two men as alone (10:35) in this approach, it is clear that the idea found its source in the mother's heart; her supreme desire was that her boys be honored above all the rest—by occupying the prominent thrones in the Messianic kingdom.

In His response the Lord said nothing to indicate that the entire notion of a future earthly kingdom is a misconception. On the contrary, He confirmed this very forecast, for He declared that these positions will be given to those for whom they have been prepared of the Father.

"Ye know not what ye ask," said Jesus. The request involved the by-passing of suffering and ignored the divine order that the cross must precede the crown. The cup which the Lord was about to drink contained both human and divine suffering. He would suffer at the hands of man and God. The disciples could never share the Savior's *atoning* sufferings but they could and would participate in those aspects of it that entailed the condemnation of men. The path to the throne is not easy. The Father will assign the honors in that coming day but Jesus offers suffering in the meantime.

The selfish ambitions of James and John now generated heat from the others. But their burning indignation only revealed similar carnal ambitions on their part. In condemning the two they were actually condemning themselves. It was not their Lord's honor that provoked their protest; it was their own. But ten cannot sit on two thrones! The sad fact is that while the Lord Jesus was occupied with His impending death, His followers were occupied with personal ambition. What lack of sympathy on their part! The only one who might be justifiably indignant at this point was the Lord Himself, but instead, He used the occasion to impart instruction. Note how soon these remarks of His concerning rewards followed the parable of the laborers in the vineyard where, in the matter of rewards, the first will be last. Note also that in the coming kingdom it is the Father who sets both the time and the positions (Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7; Matthew 20:23).

Christ's coming kingdom is based on principles opposite to those of human kingdoms, for in it there will be no room for pride or willful ambition. On the contrary, those who are honored in His kingdom serve in lowly self-effacement here and now. The meek inherit the earth; the poor in spirit inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Humbling oneself under God's mighty hand leads to certain exaltation by Him. Loving service is actually true rule. It is he who serves his brethren who rules them, the perfect example of this being found in the Lord

Jesus Himself. Calvary saw the greatest of all servants performing the greatest of all service and now this glorious Servant has the greatest of all authority over those for whom He gave Himself a ransom. Let us beware of the subtle obtrusions of "the mother of Zebedee's children." She is still with us! And she ever seeks the rights of nature to positions of eminence for her sons at the expense of the glory of Christ alone.

THE PREFACE TO THE FORMAL PRESENTATION OF THE KING (20:29-34)

The King of Israel was now going to present Himself to the capital city of Jerusalem. The acclamation and healing of the two blind men was a fitting introduction to this significant event. This miracle paved the way.

Notice Matthew's emphasis on the number *two*. Doubtless this is the same event recorded by Mark (10:46-52) and Luke (18:35-43) where it would appear that there was a single blind man. We learn here that there were two, of whom Bartimaeus was the more articulate. Matthew likes to impress his Jewish readers with valid witness to the Messiah. The law required "two or three witnesses" for the establishing of valid legal evidence. (Compare also Matthew 8:28-34 with Mark 5: 1-20.)

When Jesus opened the eyes of two blind men earlier in this Gospel He restricted their testimony (9:30) but He made no such limitation here. There was now a need for fullest public presentation of Messiah to the nation in this, its final opportunity. Moreover, this pair twice identified Jesus as "son of David" (vv. 30, 31). Their spiritual intelligence was vastly superior to that of the religious officials who had branded Jesus an imposter. *These* were the *real* blind men. So was the nation that they represented.

Students of Biblical prophecy have since seen in this miracle a pictoral foreview of the conversion of the godly Jewish remnant during the Tribulation just prior to the second advent when Jesus as Son of David will publicly return as Deliverer to Zion.

THE KING PRESENTS HIMSELF TO ISRAEL (21:1-11)

Having been publicly proclaimed as royal son of David, the King now ascended from Jericho in the Jordan Valley up to the capital city of Jerusalem. Several centuries earlier the prophet Zechariah had given details of the *role* Christ would assume ("thy king"), the *character* He would bear ("just and having salvation"), and the *manner* He would assume ("riding upon an ass, and a colt . . .") (Zechariah 9:9). All direct prophecy will be fulfilled just as accurately.

The detailed instructions given by Jesus to His two disciples (vv. 2, 3) illustrate His perfect omniscience. He knew in advance the exact whereabouts of both donkey and colt and also the reaction of the owner. Note, by the way, Zechariah's prophecy had called for both of these animals, and so both were made available and both were pressed into service. Not a jot or tittle of holy Scripture has or ever will fail of fulfillment. But the King was not only omniscient; He was also omnipotent; even the lower creatures owned His lordship. The colt had never before been ridden (Mark 11:2), and to it was given the exalted privilege of bearing its creator into "the city of the great King."

Despite all this, however, the Lord rode into His capital virtually unknown. Stirred by the excitement of an enthusiastic crowd, the citizens asked "Who is this?" The reply was vague as well—"Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee" (vv. 10, 11). Of course He *was* the prophet, but on this occasion His role of King of Israel was much more significant. The crowd acclaimed Him as the Son of David, and voiced the words of Psalm 118:26 and thus displayed at least some spiritual intelligence. The voices of the *officials* of Israel, however, were significantly absent, for they were thoroughly hostile to the whole demonstration.

THE SECOND CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE (21:12-17)

There were actually two cleansings of the Temple. The first, occurring early in the Lord's ministry, is noticed only in John (2:13-22). The second took place during the last week and is recorded by all three

synoptists. Mark gives the time of it as being the day after the King rode into Jerusalem (11:11-15).

The temple of God (v. 12) was the very heart of Israel's religious system and should have been the highest source of religious purity. It was here that Jehovah was said to dwell, and here that His honor was upheld. But the facts negated all this! The King now unmasked the greed of a corrupt priesthood. Instead of a sanctuary of holiness, the temple was a robber's den!

Christ's stern action here suggests the action He will take at His second coming in glory. In that day Malachi 3:1-5 will be completely fulfilled.

But all this has a present spiritual application to ourselves. Our bodies, being the temples of the Holy Spirit, often become defiled because of carnal trafficking, making it necessary for the Lord Jesus to purge and cleanse. But "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Corinthians 11:31, 32).

"And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them" (v. 14). In contrast with His severity with religious hypocrisy the Lord's grace to the broken and ignorant shone forth. Moreover, His fullest authority was here displayed, for His kingship rested on more than mere words—it rested on divine power. Thus Jesus alone has the moral right to purge His own house.

Mixed reactions were now awakened. The children praised; the officials protested; the King approved. Psalm 8:2 shows how true spiritual intelligence is found with the little ones. To the children belongs the Kingdom of Heaven, and Israel's proud rulers disdained such a humble classification. They would therefore remain outside the kingdom, blind and ignorant. And so the clash ended and the Lord withdrew to Bethany where true and loving hearts welcomed Him.

THE FIG TREE AND THE MOUNTAIN (21:18-22)

Infidelity has sneered at Christ's judicial blasting of the fig tree. "What

moral dignity," queried one unbelieving infidel writer, "was there in the curse on the barren fig tree?" The answer is None—unless this was a parable glowing with significance. And this is exactly the case.

The fig tree was representative of Israel (Luke 13:6-9; Hosea 9: 10). Planted by Jehovah to produce fruit for Him, it had failed. The leaves of religious profession were plentiful but the figs of spiritual life were lacking. Hence the stern denunciation, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig tree withered away." This was the only judicial miracle in the entire ministry of Jesus. It is full of moral dignity. At that very hour the nation's officials were entering into a conspiracy to destroy Him. But He was the judge, not they. The history of the old legal Israel would be forever closed at the cross. Henceforth God would find fruit in the Church and, still later, in the new Israel of millennial days (Isaiah 27:6).

The removal of the mountain into the sea pictures the old Israel being flung politically into the sea of the Gentiles. However, it has another application. Any obstacle that stands in our path today God will remove in answer to the faith that truly lays hold of Him.

AN INTERRUPTION THAT EMBARRASSED THE INTERRUPTERS (21:23-32)

Certainly the Lord had been acting most authoritatively, and now this authority was challenged by the aroused hierarchy. Not waiting until He finished His discourse, these men rudely broke in with their implied indictment, but the "greater than Solomon" took the wise in their own craftiness.

What is the point of the Lord's query regarding the source of John Baptist's mission and ministry? Surely these men had reached a settled verdict before this, for earlier they had sent a special delegation to investigate John's aims and claims. At that time John, as forerunner and herald, had given a clear testimony to Jesus Christ, identifying Him as Messiah, Lamb of God and Son of God (John 1:19-34). If these men acknowledged John's ministry to be from God they would condemn themselves, for they had already agreed that Jesus was an imposter. To

avoid self-incrimination they could not pronounce John's ministry as divine. On the other hand, to claim that John's ministry was of human origin would damage their reputation, for popular public opinion accepted John as a prophet from God. And so they were impaled on the horns of a dilemma and they lamely admitted defeat.

In the parable of the two sons Christ portrayed two classes–the irreligious profligate and the self righteous religionist. The former, through his repentance, finally obeyed; the latter, although initially professing obedience, disobeyed. The parable carried its own condemnation. The proud self-righteousness of Israel's leaders blocked the way to their receiving the true righteousness which John had proclaimed. The very dregs of society, however, had believed the message and had been saved, thus entering the kingdom. Even though these leaders had "seen it," they still remained adamant (v. 32). It is clear from this verse that true repentance is a preliminary requisite for true faith.

REJECTING THE HEIR, ISRAEL LOSES THE INHERITANCE (21:33-46)

This was a climactic parable, for it sketched and summarized Israel's past crime and present plight.

In likening that nation to a vineyard, the Lord was using well known Old Testament symbolism, and His hearers would at once recall the obvious references to Psalm 80:8-19 and Isaiah 5:1-7. Brought out of Egypt and planted in Canaan by Jehovah, Israel had been the object of the tenderest of care. God's providential divine love to Israel had been with a view to fruit. In due course the landlord appealed to his tenant-farmers through his agents for the expected yield. But the appeal failed. In fact, it awakened a latent hostility toward the owner that soon expressed itself in murderous cruelty. The climax came when the landlord's only son was brutally murdered. His battered body, hurled off the property, was the mute but awful evidence of the deadly hatred of the wicked husbandmen. Nor was this crime the fruit of ignorance. They knew who he was. The crime was therefore deliberate.

The parable pointed the accusing finger directly at Israel's leaders as the betrayers and murderers of the Son of God. In fact, this application was so inescapable that these men pronounced their own sentence (v. 41). At that very moment they were plotting the fulfillment of this parable. In casting out the true Heir, they were about to lose the inheritance and bring the divine wrath down upon themselves. The cross was to bring about a radical change in the divine dealings. This people repudiated their Messiah. God would therefore repudiate them. Israel lost the Kingdom of God (significantly the last mention of the Kingdom in Matthew) and completely forfeited her place in the divine favor.

The "nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" is the renewed Israel of the millennial future (Psalm 72:16; Isaiah 27:6). However, we must not overlook the application that Peter makes to the present day Christian community. "Ye are . . . an holy nation," he writes (1 Peter 2:9). This application, of course, does not disturb the primary interpretation. Israel will ultimately bring forth the fruits of the kingdom as God's vineyard in the earth. Proud unbelieving Israel stumbled over Christ the stumbling stone, and were politically broken (Romans 9:32, 33). But the stumbling stone of Isaiah 8:14, 15 is also the crushing Stone of Daniel 2:34, 44. The first symbol refers to His incarnation and the second to His return in power and judgment.

The application of these prophetic texts went home with piercing conviction to the hearts of these men and aroused afresh their wicked hate. They would have arrested Jesus on the spot but for public opinion. Thus their moral cowardice was exposed. Usually he who fears men fears not God. And of course the converse is equally true.

FOUR REACTIONS TO A ROYAL WEDDING INVITATION (22:1-14)

Chapter 22 brings us to the third parable in this series. These stories reveal throughout two classes of people, namely, those who resist and those who submit. In the story of the Two Sons the religionists refuse though the sinners repent and are blessed. This is followed by the

contrast between the original murderous husbandmen and the "other husbandmen" who yield obedience. And now a third picture is shown in which some originally invited spurn an invitation only to be followed by many others who accept it. We can easily discern the historical sequence of Jewish rejection followed by Gentile reception of the grace of God.

God made two gracious appeals to Israel—one before the cross and the other after. The first of these appeals resulted in the King being crowned with thorns. The second, made by the Holy Spirit through Peter after Pentecost, led to the bitter persecution of the apostles and the martyrdom of Stephen. The terms of this second offer were declared in Acts 3:19-26. (Note the R.S.V.'s correction of "when" to "that so there may come." The emphasis was that the repentance of Israel, even at this point, would have made possible the millennial times of refreshing.)

The broad features of this story are the same as in Luke 14:16-24, but the dispensational aspects are especially emphasized here. Being essentially a *kingdom* parable, it does not primarily concern heaven and the Church, but rather that sphere where heaven's authority is professedly owned on earth, resulting in a joyous relationship between God and man as illustrated by marriage. God, pictured by the King, purposed to honor His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Son's glory is paramount. The prophetic purpose calls for Him to be glorified not only in heaven, but also on the very earth—yes, the very spot—where He was crucified.

The twofold call to Israel is seen in verses 3 and 4. The first might well refer to the all-Jewish appeal of the twelve on Messiah's behalf in Matthew 10. The second corresponds to the second call to Israel outlined in Acts 3-7. As children of the covenant, Israel had the first call (Acts 3:25, 26). But they "put it from" them, and judged themselves unworthy of eternal life so the message was then directed to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46).

A third class appears in verse 6. And while the first group consisted of rejectors, and the second neglectors, the third was made up of bitterly hostile murderers. The swift disaster to descend upon these was fulfilled historically when Roman legions in A.D. 70 destroyed the

temple and put a final end to the Jewish State.

But despite all this the King's patience was not exhausted. His purpose for his son would not be frustrated; the wedding must be fully furnished with guests. Hence it is easy to see in the urgent call to all classes the Gospel invitation that now extends to the lost Gentile world. Through Israel's fall salvation is come to the Gentiles! (Romans 11:11). The wedding garment was supplied by the king, for certainly those now on their way to the banquet hall would not have it. The feast and the fitness come from a royal source, being all of grace. Christ Himself, of course, is the garment (Isaiah 61:10; Romans 3:22; 1 Corinthians 1:30).

But now a shadow falls across the scene—an intruder slips in. This man was sure that he needed no such garment; he was good enough as he was. Others might need such a robe, but not he! But in disdaining the garment he despised the king also. Investigation indicated his intrusion to be deliberate, for He did not plead ignorance of the requirement. In his question, "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?", the King gave every chance for self-defense, but no words came. He was speechless. Thus exposed, the intruder was searched, silenced and then sentenced. The awful doom that descended upon this man pictures the inescapable doom of the false religious pretender whose true condition will be exposed and judged when the King at His return "shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matthew 13:41).

THE TRAPPERS ARE TRAPPED! (22:15-22)

Although the Pharisees had been badly beaten in their contests with the Lord up to this point, they now returned to the attack. This time they employ subtlety by using their underlings, reinforced by their rivals the Herodians. The Herodians were a party that favored the dynasty of Herod and stood for the Roman conquest. They cared little or nothing for religion, and were normally opposed bitterly by the Pharisees. Luke's vivid description of these wicked envoys reads, "And they watched Him, and sent forth spies, who feigned themselves righteous, that they might take hold of his speech, so as to deliver him up to the

rule and to the authority of the governor" (20:20, A.S.V.). Under cover of flattery, they posed their loaded question (v. 16). If Jesus affirmed that taxes must be paid to Caesar, then He was no true king; in fact, He would be a most disloyal Jew. On the other hand, if He answered negatively, then He was teaching sedition against Rome.

Perceiving their wickedness, the Lord gave His famous answer, using the coin as an object lesson. Both Caesar and God were to receive their just due. However, had this very people obeyed their God they never would have come under the bondage of Caesar in the first place. They had come under Rome's yoke through sin, and now only true repentance would deliver them. No wonder that they marvelled and retreated in embarrassment.

JESUS ANSWERS THE SADDUCEES (22:23-33)

The retreating Pharisees were quickly followed by their rivals, the Sadducees. There was no rest for the Lord; it was "the same day." The pressure was on.

The Sadducees were rationalists. They rejected the Scripture (with the exception of the Pentateuch) and the supernatural, including the existence of angels, spirits and immortality. They thought the doctrine of resurrection was a philosophic absurdity. The case they presented to the Lord Jesus was probably quite hypothetical, even though the possibility of it must be allowed. Their quotation of Moses (Deuteronomy 25:5, 6) was correct. The Sadducean philosophy was rooted in a perverted view of God and His power, for it reduced the Almighty to human dimensions. They simply did not believe that He *could* raise the dead.

Christ declared that their error resulted from ignorance of the Scriptures and of the power of God. He emphatically affirmed the very teaching that they were denying—namely resurrection—and declared that persons attaining that state would be both sexless and immortal (Luke 20:35, 36). God's power would certainly take care of that! The Lord then turned these sceptics to the one portion of the Old Testament which they accepted, to draw from it the truth of the resurrection

which they refused. God had said to Moses, "I *am* (not I was) the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." These patriarchs had been dead for many years but they still existed independently of their bodies, and were still confiding in the validity of Jehovah's promises. If conscious now, they would certainly rise again to enjoy these promises. The climax of the Lord's argument came in His words, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (v. 32), even though in the disembodied state. He is not the God of nonentities. It is significant that this entire case rests upon the present tense of the verb: "I am the God . . ." etc. Quite clearly the Lord Jesus believed in the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures.

No wonder the crowd was amazed at the Lord's skillful rebuttal. But His answer was much more than a rebuttal of infidelity; it was a revelation of exact truth, for it gives us a glimpse of the present condition of the righteous dead, as well as a look at the conditions surrounding their eternal mode of existence.

The Scribes immediately complimented Jesus, though they stopped short of becoming His disciples (Luke 20:39).

THE CORE OF THE MOSAIC LAW (22:34-40)

Mark's account of this incident (12:28-34) is informative and significant. Recognizing the skill with which Christ had silenced the Sadducees, a lawyer-scribe now raised another question. Matthew bares his motive, however; he would try his hand at putting the teacher to the test. Mark records that the answer to his question made a deep impression upon this Scribe, as his observation indicates. And this in turn brought an illuminating comment from Jesus. But because Matthew's theme is the effect upon the *nation*, he omits this; an individual reaction would not reflect the national thinking.

In His answer the Lord spoke of the first and greatest of the Ten Commandments and then spoke of man's duty to man. The very core of the law as well as of the prophets is perfect love toward God and perfect love toward man. God Himself lays claim to the supreme place, establishing His inalienable right to the citadel of the soul. One's fellow

creature comes next. This indeed is infinitely more important than religious ceremony, for it relates to what a man *is* rather than to what he *does*. Sin has perverted all this, of course, by dethroning God and enthroning self. How soul-searching all this is! Well does Scroggie remark, "Jesus always went to the heart of things. He always disentangled the absolute from the relative, and the essential from the dependable. By love, and only by love, can all moral problems be solved, and all moral obligations be fulfilled."

THE COUNTER ATTACK (22:41-46)

Having thwarted every verbal assault, the Lord now directed a question at the religionists—a question that finally and completely silenced them. They correctly answered His question as to Messiah being David's son so the Lord confounded these men by quoting one of their own Scriptures. Psalm 110:1 clearly indicates that David, writing by the Holy Spirit (Mark 12:36), recognized Messiah as his lord. But how could he properly address his son as his lord?

Of course, the Pharisees' answer was quite true—the Christ was David's son. But it was not the *whole* truth. The whole truth lay in the acknowledgment that Messiah was *both* son and lord. As the former He was human; as the latter He was divine. This double truth was to be later declared in Revelation 22:16: "I am the root and the offspring of David. . . ."

Thus the Lord Jesus triumphed gloriously and proclaimed the twin truth that lies at the very heart of the Christian revelation—the Messiah would be both man and God in one unique and glorious person. Nor was this proclamation some sudden theological novelty. It had been in the Scriptures for centuries as an essential and integral truth.

But their consciences were seared, their hearts hardened, and their wills adamant in unbelief. Silenced indeed, the Lord's enemies neither acknowledged conviction nor surrendered.

Exam questions for lesson 9 will be found on pages 10/15-17.

Lesson Ten

More Predictions of the King

(MATTHEW 23-25)

WOE, WOE, WOE (23:1-39)

This chapter forever shatters the illusory image of a soft Christ. True, He was meek and lowly in heart, a friend of publicans and sinners, tender and forgiving toward the broken and penitent. But this fervent expostulation makes clear that the divine holiness is utterly intolerant of every form of pretense and of religious hypocrisy. This denunciation was not as an ill-considered outburst of passion. It is rather the holy anger of God Himself.

Three groups are addressed in this chapter—the crowd (vv. 1-7), the disciples (vv. 8-12), the Scribes and Pharisees (vv. 13-36). The touching lament that closes this pronouncement is addressed to the nation, personified here in its sacred capital, Jerusalem (vv. 37-39). Climaxing His denunciation with sobbing disappointment, the Savior-Messiah reminds them of His oft-repeated and oft-spurned offer of protection and deliverance. It is important to note that these woes are addressed to the leaders, rather than the rank and file of Israel.

1. The Command and the Warning (23:1-7)

By setting themselves down on Moses' seat, the Pharisees claimed to be the authoritative exponents of the law, and the Lord acknowledges this (v. 2), though cautioning His hearers against their inconsistent practices. The office was to be respected. The

commands of Moses, being actually the commands of God, were in full force up until the cross. Jesus had come as a minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made unto the fathers (Romans 15:8). At the cross, however, the veil was rent from top to bottom, God thus declaring that all distance was removed, and, on the ground of full atonement, He could bless and save sinners. The types and ceremonies of Judaism having served their purpose would be of no further value. Christianity would introduce the new dispensation based upon the death, resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ.

The Scribes and Pharisees were orthodox in teaching, but heterodox in practice. The late Dr. Graham Scroggie used to say that if the devil preached the Gospel we ought to respect his message even though we know that he neither believes nor practices it! It is possible to get a good message from a bad man.

These leaders loved prominence, power and praise. Their religious ostentation was displayed in their love for the spotlight at feast and synagogue, in their craving for ecclesiastical titles, and in their "making broad their phylacteries" (square capsules, covered with leather, containing on small scrolls of parchment four sections of the law—Exodus 13:1-10; 11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21—and fastened by long leather straps to the forehead, and round the left arm near the heart).

2. **True Humility** (23:8-12)

Notice the "ye" here. These words were particularly directed to the disciples, hence to us today. Here are three prohibitions regarding religious titles. Rabbi means "teacher" (John 1:38, A.S.V.), and was simply a courteous form of address. Although both our Lord and John the Baptist accepted this title (Matthew 26:25, 49; John 3:26), we must not use it to imply a superior spiritual authority.

The idea of "master" as well as teacher is in the term "Rabbi" and the context would favor this latter significance here. Because of the common brotherhood among the disciples, none

was to claim the position of an ecclesiastical superior. But the title "Father" is also prohibited in the realm of the spiritual. Father suggests life, and this comes from God alone. And though later on Paul refers to himself as having begotten the Corinthians through the Gospel, he is careful to add that it was only "in Christ Jesus" that he had become their father and they his children (1 Corinthians 4:15). It does not follow, of course, that they addressed him by the title "Father."

In the Christian realities the heights are reached through the depths. The greatest of all is the slave of all. True love delights to serve, and herein lies true authority. The Lord's emphatic and repeated precept in verse 12 (Luke 14:11; 18:14) finds echoes in the after writings of both James (4:10) and Peter (1 Peter 5:6).

3. **Seven Woes** (23:13-36)

Jesus' warnings were followed by His seven woes which in turn issue in His closing wail. We say *seven* because the A.S.V. and other dependable translations favor the omission of verse fourteen. It is important to notice that these bursts of condemnation were not directed toward ordinary sinners; for such Christ had nothing but compassion and grace. They were directed toward shameless religious pretenders, who, by their rejection of the Lord, locked the door of heaven's kingdom in men's faces threatening with excommunication any who confessed allegiance to Jesus (John 9:22; 12:42). They thus became responsible for not only their own eternal loss, but also that of others. What condemnation awaits such men!

Moreover they were zealous to make a proselyte to their own cult. A proselyte is a convert, of course, and no effort was too great and no cost too high to gain one. But instead of becoming a citizen of heaven, such an one became the very opposite—twofold more a child of hell than he was before because of the propensity of the proselyte to go *beyond* his teacher. To his preconversion sins the proselyte adds the new ones that accrued through his acceptance of Pharisaic hypocrisy and unbelief. His condemnation,

therefore, would be much more severe (v. 15).

The third "woe" embraced the denunciation of verses 16-22 and unmasked the twisted sense of proportion of these blind leaders. According to their standards, to base an oath on either temple, altar, or even heaven, meant nothing at all, and left the swearer free of responsibility. But to swear by the gold of the temple, or gift on the altar brought with it a binding responsibility. Our Lord, however, cut right through this casuistry. The temple actually sanctifies the gold, the altar the gift, and heaven the throne. Swearing by these, therefore, indicated not an empty oath but actually a greater one.

The next three "woes" (vv. 23-28) were scathing indeed as they unbared the true inward condition of these religious pretenders. Scrupulously they dedicated to God ten per cent of even the smallest of garden herbs but blandly ignored the great moral requirements of life; a sprig of mint was of more value than an act of mercy! It was more important to have the outside of the cup polished and clean than to have that same cup emptied and cleansed of its vile contents! The corruption of a grave could be hidden by the monument erected over it!

The seventh "woe," occupying verses 29-36, contained the charge, the verdict and the final sentence of the Judge of Israel. These solemn words should be read slowly in order that their true weight be impressed upon us. These hypocrites admitted their relationship to the fathers but proclaimed their innocence concerning any involvement in the crimes against the prophets. They honored the prophets with expensive memorials. Did this not declare the purity of their hearts? (vv. 29, 30). But the Lord significantly reminded them that they were the sons of these murderers, and that they themselves would soon consummate the long accumulating guilt of Israel. The words of verse 32 contain an echo of Genesis 15:16. The crime of Calvary, to be followed by the stoning of Stephen, would fill up their measure, manifesting them as moral serpents facing a yawning hell.

The glance at the bloody past is now followed by a prophecy of the future. These very men who protested any association with

crimes of their fathers would soon repeat that very history (v. 34) and become the heirs of a most dreadful harvest (vv. 35, 36).

4. Oh, Jerusalem (23:37-39)

The trial is now over. The woes are past. The Judge has pronounced. The nation is doomed. But lest they conclude that the Judge has no heart, the court is now hushed by His own woe.

Jerusalem personified the nation. The double form of address emphasized the deep pathos of the Lord. Despite the city's habitual and brutal treatment of the prophets of God, He would have been their protector and deliverer. Again and again He would have fulfilled the promise of Psalm 91:4 on their behalf, but their refusal had been adamant. The words "and ye would not" declare emphatically the obstinancy of the human will to hinder and to frustrate God's blessing. Notice it is not "ye could not," but "ye *would* not."

But the die had been cast. *Their* house, once owned as His Father's (John 2:16), would lie in desolation until Israel should reverse its attitude, voicing from the heart the language which those scorned prophets had long before expressed, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Psalm 118:26).

THE GREAT PROPHECY (24:1–25:46)

The opening words of chapter 24 are of tremendous significance: "Jesus went out, and departed from the temple." By this deliberate act He gave effect to His solemn pronouncement at the close of the preceding chapter. This second Sermon on the Mount, embracing both the 24th and 25th chapters should be read *at a sitting.* (Such a reading should also embrace the parallel accounts in Mark 13 and Luke 21.) A careful study of this entire prophetic discourse indicates that it falls into three clearly defined sections, as follows: (1) The Jewish Aspect (24:1-44); (2) The Christian Aspect (24:45–25:30); (3) The Gentile Aspect (25: 31-46).

The first movement concerns the sufferings of the godly Jewish remnant during the climactic end times, culminating in their deliverance at the Lord's return to earth. The second, entailing three parables, deals with professing Christendom during this age, the mixed condition of real and false being discriminatively dealt with at the Lord's return. The final movement concerns the judgment of the Gentile nations by the King at His manifestation.

Let us again urge a study of this entire prophecy as a whole before seeking to interpret the details. Get the proper perspective and the component parts will fit into perfect place. Also do not forget Matthew's viewpoint. He has emphasized throughout Messiah's relation to Israel and has now reached the point where the nation has officially rejected Him, and where He in turn has rejected it. Israel now faced inescapable condemnation. In the meantime "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" would run their course, involving a mixed condition of true and false Christian profession. This too must be judged at the Lord's return. If these distinctions are borne in mind, many problems will be solved.

We should watch for three significant titles in this discourse. In the first movement Jesus emphasizes the title "Son of Man"; in the second He is seen as "Lord"; in the third and final section He is presented as "King." These titles fit exactly with the theme of each section.

With these preliminary remarks let us now look at the first main section.

1. **The Jewish Aspect** (24:1-44)

Three questions were put to Jesus by four of His disciples following His startling announcement regarding the complete demolition of the temple. Perhaps the disciples, in their dismay at their Master's remark in chapter 23:38, sought to freshly impress Him with the external glory of their sanctuary. But any hopes they may have had were soon dashed: the buildings would shortly be levelled! This bombshell evoked the question, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

The answer to the first question (the time of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple) is given in Luke 21:20-24. Just because there are certain common features between the destruction of the temple and the close of the age it does not follow that the two passages are identical (compare Luke 21:21, 23 with Matthew 24: 16-19). The "until" of Luke 21:24 proves this. The overthrow of the city and temple occurred in A.D. 70 but many of the circumstances surrounding that disaster will be repeated in the final seige of Jerusalem in the last days. Zechariah 14:1-11 should be considered in this connection.

The answers to the two questions concerning the sign of His coming and the end of the age are found in Matthew 24:1-24. We must not force the Christian Church into this passage. These men knew almost nothing about the Church at this time. It is true that they entered this new society at Pentecost, but at the time of this prophecy they were simply a believing Jewish remnant who clung to Jesus as the true Messiah. Certainly there are warnings and exhortations here by which Christians may always profit, but the whole atmosphere is primarily Jewish. Observe the references to false Messiahs (Christs) and false prophets (vv. 5, 24), synagogues (Mark 13:9), the holy place (v. 15), Judaea (v. 16), and the Sabbath day (v. 20).

In this passage we see a persecuted Jewish minority witnessing for God amidst the world convulsions that will immediately precede the manifestation of the Son of Man. The representatives of this future Jewish election were the disciples, the Messiah's associates in the days of His flesh.

The true Church will not participate in this at all for it will be removed before this period of affliction begins (1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10). Just as it was not in existence at the time of our Lord's earthly testimony, so it will not be present during the time of earth's greatest sorrow.

In this prophecy Jesus described the coming period of wrath. The words of verse 21 are simply terrifying. Then note that although the Church has always been subject to suffering and remedial discipline, it has never been the subject of penalty. The

coming affliction under discussion here is *not remedial;* it is *penal.* Therefore the true Church will in no way participate in this fiery baptism (compare John 16:33 with Romans 8:1, A.S.V.).

The words of verse 13, "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved," call for a word of explanation. To apply them to the eternal salvation we enjoy today is to do violence to the context. But interpret it in the light of its setting and it is clear that our Lord is not referring to spiritual salvation but rather to *physical preservation,* "the end" referring to the end of that period and not to the end of life. The judgments will be so devastating that unless the days are shortened by divine mercy, all flesh would be swept away (v. 22). The good news of the kingdom (v. 14) to be preached by this persecuted godly remnant is the announcement that the true King is about to return to establish His authority over the earth. The expression "gospel of the kingdom" is peculiar to Matthew and refers to that aspect of God's good news that especially applies to Israel. When it was preached by the Lord and His apostles in the Jewish synagogues it was accompanied by miraculous healings (4:24; 9:35; 10:7, 8). No doubt when this message is taken up again by the Jewish remnant during the tribulation it will be marked by accompanying miracles once more. This will be God's answer to the spurious miracles of the false prophets (24:24).

The setting up of "the abomination of desolation" (v. 15) in the rebuilt Jewish temple (2 Thessalonians 2:4) will be a warning sign for the godly remnant. The latter half of Daniel's seventieth week of years is about to begin* (2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 13). The full onslaught of "the great tribulation" (notice the word "then" of verse 21) follows. It will be climaxed by the visible and glorious return of the Son of Man to the earth, accompanied by the glorified Church saints and the holy angels. He will stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives and will awaken the surprise and worship of the tribes of Israel, the admiration of all them that

*We suggest you study the Emmaus course *Bible Prophecy* by C. E. Tatham for further light on this subject.

believe, and the destruction of all His foes (24:29, 30; Zechariah 14; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-16).

The sounding of the trumpet, and the great round-up of the elect by the angels (v. 31) must not be confused with the rapture of the saints described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. This latter event is different, not only in point of time, but also in character and details. In contrast to the resurrection of the righteous dead and the catching away of the living at the rapture here there is only a miraculous regathering to Jerusalem of living Jewish witnesses from the ends of the earth, whither they have been scattered (Psalm 50:4, 5; Zechariah 2:6).

The generation surviving until the Lord's public return is apparently the generation of Israelites which will witness the setting up of the abominable image in the Jerusalem temple.

What is meant by one being taken and the other left (vv. 40, 41)? Those "taken" in Noah's day were taken in wrath; those "left" were preserved for blessing. When Christ returns He will righteously discriminate between those who will be doomed to judgment and those to be left for millennial blessing.

Verse 44 closes this first great movement with a rousing call to watch. The return of the Son of Man will burst unexpectedly upon men. Read now chapter 25:31 and what follows. This section might very naturally continue the flow of thought. However, the three parables that intervene take us back to the ascension of Jesus Christ, and they then carry us through the entire history of the *professing* Christian Church to the return of the Lord.

2. Three Parables Concerning Christendom (24:45–25:30)

Having sketched the testimony of Jewry in the light of the Lord's return, Jesus next outlined in three parables the testimony of professing Christianity. These are the parable of the two servants (24:45-51), the virgins (25:1-13), and the talents (25:14-30). Each involved a mixed condition, with either reward or reprisal at the Lord's return. The condemned ones in each case are guilty of sins

of omission and not comission. The evil servant, the foolish virgins and the wicked talent-burying sluggard were all judged because of what they did *not* do. Here is a solemn lesson for us all.

The first parable contrasted two servants and their attitudes. The first one was both faithful and wise right up to the moment of the return and was rewarded by being made ruler over all. The evil servant lost hope in his master's soon advent and became cruel and vile. Evil doctrine always issues in evil living and to lose sight of the Lord's return can lead to callousness and carelessness.

But how could a *servant* of Christ suffer eternal perdition? The answer is that this was his *professed* status, and he was judged on his own ground. He claimed to be a servant and was judged as such. Externally he was orthodox (he said, "My *lord* delayeth"), but he was not real. Because he was a hypocrite he is destined to spend eternity with the lost. Similarly today's unconverted and liberal church workers will have to answer to God on the same basis. (See James 3:1, noting that "masters" is really "teachers".)

The second parable also mirrors Christian profession and its testing at the unexpected return of the Son of Man. All ten virgins had the visible lamps of professed reality but only half the number had the invisible but essential oil—the well known symbol of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38; Hebrews 1:9), which they had acquired in advance. This alone demonstrated their true wisdom, making them ready when the bridegroom came. The shut door cut off all hope for those who had foolishly neglected the one thing needful, and fixed their doom as outsiders forever. The Lord's words in verse 13 are solemn and final.

The final parable embraces the commission and departure, the investments, the return and consequent investigation, the rewards and reprisal.

The departing master trusted his goods to his servants and divided his talents, or money, in varying proportions. These proportions depend upon ability. The various results showed the various responses of the servants. The master's return brought to light success and failure and exposed the heart attitude toward the master himself. There will be surprises for all at the end.

The master is Christ and the servants His professed subjects. Varying ability suggests differing gift bestowed by the Lord (Romans 12:6; Ephesians 4:7). Every member of Christ's body has some particular gift or gifts and is responsible to increase his Lord's "goods" by trading. The goods represent His truth viewed as a sacred deposit entrusted to the believer to both practice and to propagate (compare 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:14; Jude 3). And just as the ability determined the amount of the talents bestowed, so the measure of spiritual gift determines the responsibility for handling divine truth.

How few of us ever double our capital! How few increase the store of truth by trading! In the experience of the Christian, divine truth increases in store as it is obeyed, and as it is shared with others. Paradoxically, it is actually increased by our giving it away.

The master in the story did not specifically *command* his servants to increase their talents. Two of them did so voluntarily, doubtless because they knew and loved him. Both doubled their capital and both received exactly the same commendation (vv. 21, 23). Although the ability of one was only two-fifths that of the other, both were rewarded equally because of equal faithfulness. The servant who buried his talent and later accused his lord of being a hard man was really false and wicked at heart. He really never knew the master. Many a religious but Christless leader today has both spiritual aptitude and a knowledge of truth and will be similarly judged on the ground that he has assumed (vv. 26-30). He has claimed recognition as a servant of Christ. On the basis of that claim he will be judged!

3. **The Gentile Aspect** (25:31-46)

Chapter 24:30, 31 connects with chapter 25:31. The former discusses the visible return to the earth of Jesus Christ and the miraculous regathering of His elect Jewish witnesses; the latter discusses the same event, but in connection with the assembling of the nations. The "elect" are the "brethren" (25:40). They are Jewish witnesses and are seen here as the basis for dividing the nations

into either "sheep" or "goats." The Lord's title as "King" (vv. 34, 40) is significant for He is never presented as King to the Church, but rather to the world of men (Revelation 15:3, A.S.V.).

It might be helpful to consider the *when*, the *where*, the *who*, the *what* and the *why* of this crisis. The *when* is the return of Christ in glory preceding the Millennium (v. 31) and the *where* is the earth, probably the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:11-16). The *who* is Christ in His role as supreme Judge; the subjects are the Gentile nations and the brethren. The *what* concerns the final sessional judgment of the living nations—the issues being the kingdom or the lake of fire. We must not confound this judgment with that of the wicked dead at the close of the Millennium at the great white throne (Revelation 20).

The nations are divided into two categories, sheep and goats, but it must not be concluded that they are bulked together and collectively either blessed or cursed. It was as *individuals* that these Gentiles fed, clothed, housed and visited in prison the distressed ones during the Great Tribulation.

The third class who provide the hinge on which everything turns is designated "my brethren" (v. 40). The term suggests the closest of relationships and affections, reminding us of those persecuted witnesses already mentioned in chapter ten. It was of them that Jesus declared, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me" (v. 40). Read chapter 12:48-50 as well as Acts 9:4 in this connection, noting how closely the Lord identifies Himself with His people. Here then is the faithful Jewish remnant, "the third part," who have been brought through the fire of the intense antichristian hatred of the two Beasts (Revelation 13) and refined as silver is refined (Zechariah 13:8, 9). Now their trial is over. The Deliverer has come to Zion. Their testimony is vindicated and they stand at the King's side in triumph.

"I was hungry . . . I was thirsty . . . I was a stranger . . . naked . . . I was in prison," says the King to those at His right hand. "And ye gave me meat . . . drink . . . clothed me . . . visited me. . . ." "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you. . . ." The promises of

chapter 5 now receive their complete fulfillment and the mourners are comforted, the merciful obtain mercy and the meek inherit the earth. These "sheep" go into kingdom blessing because of their works. They are saved by faith in the Lord Jesus, as King, on the ground of pure grace, just the same as we are today. But they had given evidence of this faith by befriending the King's representatives. Their faith had been seen only by God; their works were seen by men. Dr. Graham Scroggie expressed it well when he remarked that "the act of our hand reflects the attitude of our heart."

Both sheep and goats have now arrived at "prepared" destinies. The kingdom was prepared for these very Gentile believers from the world's foundation (v. 34), while the everlasting fire, originally prepared for Satan and his wicked angels, now admits also all people who have refused to part company with him. Both classes enter these destinies at the Lord's appearing for the millennial kingdom will include only those who are regenerated. All others will be excluded. Those entering the millennial kingdom go into life eternal. They enjoy the period of earth's "regeneration," and then go on into a blessed eternity. Because they were righteous before God by faith they were the possessors of eternal life. Now they enter into the sphere of this life.

We must not overlook its present application of this much misunderstood passage to us today. We also are Christ's brethren, and He has so closely identified Himself with the Church that whatever treatment we enjoy or suffer is enjoyed or suffered by Him. To touch the believer is to touch the apple of His eye (Zechariah 2:8). He feels in glory what every member bears. To wound *His* is to wound *Him;* to serve *His* is to serve *Him.* "Every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (1 John 5:1). Love for Christ is therefore the basic touchstone for all divine blessing, whether in the earthly or the heavenly sphere.

Exam questions for lesson 10 will be found on pages 10/17-19.

MATTHEW

Exam 5
Lessons 9, 10

Name_____ (print plainly) Exam Grade____

Address _____

City_____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Class Number _____

Instructor _____

LESSON 9

In the blank space in the right-hand margin write the letter of the correct answer.

1. The parable of the laborers teaches
a. the need for organizing labor into unions
b. the discrimination technique of big business
c. the need for getting a contract when engaged in any type of employment
d. the need for proper motives in the Lord's work d

2. James and John provoked the other disciples to anger by
a. wanting the top positions in Christ's kingdom
b. refusing to wash the feet of the disciples when their turn came around
c. seeking to control the flow of funds donated to the Lord's work
d. performing more miracles than the other disciples A

3. Matthew tells us of the healing of two blind men near Jericho. The name of one of them was Bartimaeus. We know this because
a. Matthew tells us so
b. Mark tells us so
c. Luke tells us so
d. all three writers tell us so
e. both Mark and Luke tell us so d

4. Who foretold that Christ would ride into Jerusalem in triumph on an unbroken colt?
   a. Isaiah
   b. Jeremiah
   c. Zechariah
   d. Malachi

c

5. The cursing of the fig tree was symbolic of
   a. the unblessed state of fallen mankind
   b. Christ's soon-coming death on the cursed cross
   c. the fate of all those who reject Christ
   d. the doom soon to fall upon Israel as a nation

d

6. In likening Israel to a vineyard the Lord
   a. was introducing symbolism with which the Jews would be unfamiliar
   b. employed a symbol well known to the Jews
   c. was simply quoting from the second psalm
   d. was drawing attention particularly to the ***Gentiles*** who are often symbolized in this way in Scripture

b

7. The royal wedding invitation has to do primarily with
   a. the kingdom
   b. the Church
   c. heaven
   d. none of the above

a

8. The man without the wedding garment pictures
   a. the nation of Israel during the Great Tribulation
   b. the Old Testament believer
   c. the New Testament saint
   d. the false religious pretender

d

9. The question the Sadducees put to the Lord Jesus concerned the question of
   a. eternal punishment
   b. the creation of the world
   c. the resurrection
   d. divorce and remarriage

c

10. The ***great*** commandment of the law concerns
a. loving God supremely
b. loving one's neighbor as oneself
c. honoring one's parents
d. keeping the Sabbath

a

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Have you kept the ***great*** commandment of the law? If not what is your present state in God's sight?

It is hard to be what I should be for God but I read the Bible and pray every day for God to guide me.

LESSON 10

In the blank space in the right-hand margin write the letter of the correct answer.

11. By setting themselves down on Moses' seat, the Pharisees claimed to be
a. in the line of apostolic succession from Moses
b. infallible in all matters of faith and morals
c. the authoritative exponents of the law
d. greater than all the prophets

c

12. The Lord told His disciples that they should
a. accept the title "Rabbi" (i.e. "teacher") but refuse the title "Father"
b. accept the title "Reverend," especially when it denoted spiritual authority, but refuse the title "Father"
c. accept New Testament titles such as "Bishop," "Elder," "Deacon" and "Father" when they denote spiritual authority but refuse all secular titles
d. refuse all titles which would denote spiritual authority

d

13. The "woes" pronounced by the Lord in chapter 23 were directed against
a. all mankind
b. the Jewish nation
c. religious pretenders
d. Herod

14. Matthew 24, 25; Mark 13 and Luke 21 have one thing in common. They give details of
a. the crucifixion
b. the Lord's discourse to the disciples in the Upper Room
c. coming events
d. the Lord's last three miracles

15. The Lord's Olivet Discourse as recorded by Matthew dealt with three great themes. Which of the following places them in their proper order? It dealt with
a. the suffering of the godly Jewish remnant in the end times; the judgment on the Gentile nations; professing Christendom during this age
b. professing Christendom during this age; the suffering of the godly Jewish remnant in the end times; the judgment of the Gentile nations
c. the sufferings of the godly Jewish remnant in the end times; professing Christendom during this age; the judgment on the Gentile nations
d. the judgment on the Gentile nations; the sufferings of the godly Jewish remnant in the end times; professing Christendom during this age

16. The disciples asked the Lord three questions which resulted in the Olivet Discourse. The first question is
a. not answered at all
b. answered in the epistles
c. answered by Matthew only
d. answered in Luke 21:20-24

17. According to Matthew's Gospel, what will be ***the*** sign that the latter half of Daniel's "seventieth week" is about to begin? The
a. rebirth of the state of Israel
b. apostasy of Christendom
c. setting up of "the abomination of desolation" in the rebuilt Jewish temple
d. the rapture of the Church

18. Which of the following parables does not concern Christendom at the end of the age? The parable of

a. the ten virgins
b. the talents
c. the two servants
d. the sheep and the goats _____

19. Where will the judgment of the nations take place?

a. In Jerusalem
b. On the Mount of Olives
c. In the Valley of Jehoshaphat
d. By the Sea of Galilee _____

20. Who are the people spoken of by the Lord, in the parable of the sheep and goats, as "my brethren"?

a. Christians
b. The entire Jewish nation
c. The faithful Jewish remnant
d. The twelve apostles _____

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What sign of the Lord's near return impresses you most as you look at the world today? Explain how and why you are affected by this sign.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

MAIL TO address shown on back outside cover.
PLEASE enclose a stamped addressed envelope for the return of your corrected exam.

Lesson Eleven

The Arrest and Trial of the King

(MATTHEW 26)

What amazement and dismay must have filled the disciples as their Lord on concluding His great prophetic discourse announced that He was about to be executed like a common criminal! The fact that He announced the exact time and manner of His execution clearly indicated Him to be in full control. He would die as *Lord,* and His death would be voluntary.

TWO GATHERINGS (26:1-13)

This paragraph presents a gathering of Christ's foes assembling in an atmosphere of hate and a gathering of His friends assembling in an atmosphere of love.

The conspiracy in the official residence of the high priest was the center of the gathering storm. The prophet must be eliminated at all costs, but "not on the feast day," they said. The coup must not be sprung on the Passover lest it spark a riot among the man's supporters and such a riot could bring serious consequences to them and the city. But the Son of God had already said "after *two* days," indicating that He *would* die on the feast day. We see from this how completely in control He was.

The second gathering was of Christ's loved ones who had spread a supper for Him in Bethany, described by John as "the town of Mary and her sister Martha" (John 11:1). This supper occurred "*six* days

before the Passover" (John 12:1); hence it is chronologically out of place in this narrative of events that concerns *two* days before the feast. Probably Matthew introduces this story four days after it has happened to provide a framework of love and loyalty for Judas' act of hate and treachery. It also shows that Judas had been seeking opportunity for the betrayal for four full days, having been warned by the authorities, however, to not precipitate things on the feast day.

Mary's selfless devotion was in sharp contrast with the dull comprehension and worldly spirit of the apostles. The value of the ointment was about a year's salary. This is why John described it as "very costly" (12:3). The disciples, sad to say, echoed the words of Judas and cried, "This waste." Mary alone seemed to have grasped the truth of Christ's impending death, and poured out upon Him her most costly treasure. He must have her all! This act was interpreted by the Lord as a preparation for His burial. Mary may well have feared that she would not have access to that body after His execution so she performed her beautiful deed in advance.

Matthew and Mark record that Jesus' head was anointed; John says it was His feet. Both accounts are true but it is more in keeping with Matthew's emphasis to call our attention to the King's head. The Lord could not let such sacrificial worship go unnoticed. Therefore, wherever the good news is proclaimed throughout the world she shall have as an abiding memorial the recounting of her act. This story has indeed awakened the fresh fragrance of worship in countless souls ever since.

"WHAT WILL YE GIVE ME?" (26:14-16)

John unmasked the true motive of Judas in questioning the "waste" of Mary's act. He had secretly hoped that the ointment would be turned into cash and entrusted to him as treasurer, for at heart he was a thief (John 12:6). Thwarted of easy gain, the traitor went to the religious authorities and agreed to betray the Master to them for the price of a slave (Exodus 21:32). Covetousness was the deadly cancer eating at this man's soul.

Here then are three reactions to the Lord's presence in that Bethany home—the worship of Mary, the criticism of the disciples and the treachery of Judas. Which of these three reflects *my* attitude?

THE UPPER ROOM (26:17-30)

The feast of unleavened bread lasted for seven days and followed immediately upon the annual Passover. Our Lord and His twelve apostles now sat down in the evening hour to partake of the meal together. Before the next evening He would die as the true Passover Lamb! Notice the emphasis on Jesus' authority and knowledge. Read again verse 18 and then compare it with Luke 22:11. Matthew's account gives the authoritative voice of a King. There was no request here. Then observe His perfect foreknowledge in verse 21 and His identification of the betrayer in verse 25. Notice also that the prediction of Scripture does not relieve men of their personal responsibility. Jesus would die precisely as the prophets had described but terrible judgment would descend upon the traitor just the same. It would be better for Judas never to have been born. Our Lord could never have uttered such terrible words had He advocated the doctrine of universal reconciliation. Otherwise it had been better for Judas to *have* been born. This wretched man had never been truly regenerated, although he had passed among men as a true lover of Christ. The others addressed Jesus as Lord (v. 22); Judas used the word "Rabbi" (v. 25, A.S.V.), a title of mere respect. The traitor ate the Passover but apparently did not participate in the new Supper that followed.

God never recognized another Passover. The antitype had come so the shadow was no longer valuable. But the old prepared the way for the new, for as they were eating, Jesus took bread and wine, using two of the items on the table, and clothed them with a new significance. The broken bread would symbolize His body, the wine His precious blood. The bread so often used in Judaism would now become a symbol in Christianity. Each one was to eat the bread and drink the wine. By the "blood of the new testament," or covenant, the Lord was referring to a sacred contract—"new" because it stood in sharp contrast with the

old. The Law of Moses had also been ratified by blood, blood which signified death to the violator (Exodus 24:8; Hebrews 9:19, 20), but this blood would bring *pardon* to the violator! It would bring death to Jesus but forgiveness to those for whom it was shed. The law demanded the blood of the transgressor. It found its answer and satisfaction in the blood of the sinless Substitute. The memorial cup symbolizes this glorious truth.*

These men in a sense were the representatives of the elect remnant of Israel. The Messiah here promised to abstain from all wine, symbol of earthly joy, until that glad day when He would enter upon that joy in its fullness (v. 29). Israel will then be fully restored to Him. The Gentile too will be blessed, both heaven and earth acknowledging Christ's supreme authority. He will then celebrate His deep joy by drinking the fruit of the vine with His happy people. In the meantime the heavenly Nazarite will abstain.

The upper room ministry concludes with the singing of a Psalm –probably the great Hallel, consisting of Psalms 113-118. If this surmise is correct, what burning thoughts must have coursed through our Lord's mind as He raised His voice in praise with those twelve men! For the joy that was set before Him He would endure the coming cross. His followers might view it as a calamity, but for Him it was a conquest that would issue in eternal triumph.

THE DIALOGUE ON THE WAY TO THE GARDEN (26:31-35)

Here we have another example of our Lord's prescience. Everyone of these men would be stumbled within a very few hours because of Him, and Peter would deny Him three times. The prophet Zechariah had foreseen this centuries earlier and had attributed the scattering of these sheep to the divine smiting of the shepherd (Zechariah 13:7). Jehovah was about to strike His Fellow, bringing dismay and terror to the followers. But the smitten One would revive and live again, and in resurrection His loving interest would be undiminished, for He would go before

*For a complete study of the Lord's Supper we suggest the Emmaus course by that title.

them as leader into the Gentile country of Galilee. The scattering would turn into a gathering, and He would still be both center and leader.

"All ye shall be offended because of me this night," warned the Lord Jesus. In other words, He would become a stumbling block to them. Knowing Him to be possessed of all knowledge and power, they would be so shocked to see Him arrested and maltreated that their confidence would suffer a breakdown. Peter flatly contradicted the Lord's words (vv. 33, 35). Earlier that evening Jesus had warned Peter of his denial (Luke 22:31-34; John 13:37, 38), and now, during the walk to the garden, He repeats the warning. But Peter is adamant. This might be true of the others, but as for him—never! Peter was sincere but he did not know the weakness of his own heart. The sad fact is that in contradicting the Lord he fell right there! The threefold denial a little later was the bitter fruit of which this was the root, and in lesser degree the same applied to all of those self-assured men that night. They were to all experience the truth that "pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN (26:36-46)

Gethsemane was a grove of olive trees near the foot of Olivet where our Lord often resorted with His disciples (John 18:2). Entering this garden, He left eight of His followers just inside the entrance, while Peter, James and John accompanied Him further into the shadows. He exhorted them to watch with Him and proceeded a little beyond them and then in agony fell on His face and cried to His Father. Seeking sympathy, He returned to the three, only to find them asleep. Addressing Peter, He urged fresh diligence saying, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" Did this prick the conscience of the man who, minutes earlier, had boasted the strongest loyalty? If so, it did not last for Peter was soon asleep again. The spirit was ready, but the flesh was weak.

Three times Jesus prayed and twice He had to awaken the sleeping disciples. Finally He aroused them to announce His impending arrest and to say that their opportunity to watch with Him was over.

The Lord's experience in this garden was unique. His soul *began* (notice that) to be "sorrowful and very heavy . . . even unto death" (vv. 37, 38). The words suggest a depth of depression, a surge of sorrow, that cannot be explained. It must have been a horrifying seizure of black terror that held Him in its grip, forcing blood-like sweat to appear. The ancient prophecy of Psalm 116:3 had been His own words, not David's, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow." This was His experience that night. He was looking into that dreadful cup. He was not afraid that the Devil might kill Him before He could reach the cross, as some have suggested. Nor was He shrinking from the physical anguish of crucifixion, for this could mark Him a coward. It was from that which the cross involved that He shrank—the bearing of the full weight of our condemnation and the curse of God against sin. The cup was the symbol of the penalty, and the drinking of it signified bearing that penalty. It involved Christ's being "made sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Now Jesus' human will of course was not in conflict with the divine. But He gazed into that cup and recognized that the drinking of it meant an interruption in the fellowship He had enjoyed with His God from all eternity and He shrank back in horror. It was to be more than a mere suspension of communion. He must endure wrath from the hand of His God. The darkness that would descend upon Calvary would only faintly illustrate the unfathomable spiritual darkness that would envelope His soul. His anguished cry of verse 39 was that He be spared this if any other possible means of man's redemption were available. In the second and third prayers He submissively consented to its impossibility. He would drink the cup. The battle was won.

THE BETRAYAL, THE ARREST AND FULFILLED SCRIPTURES (26:47-56)

As the Lord withdrew from the garden He proved again His perfect knowledge of coming developments. The disciples were caught up by surprise, but not He. Even as He was announcing it (vv. 46, 47), Judas

emerged from the shadows with a murderous rabble dispatched by the hierarchy. The betrayer covered Jesus with kisses (the Greek bears this meaning), this perfidious act being the signal to the mob to seize Him. How true Solomon's proverb (27:6) was proved to be that night—"Faithful are the wounds of a friend (shown in Christ's rebuke of Peter); but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (shown in the infamy of Judas). The tender word "Friend" was surely designed to awaken the conscience of Judas, but all in vain. Satan had already filled his heart, and he had crossed the line of no return. His kisses were the signal to "hold him fast." How blinded by the Devil he was to imagine that puny men could hold fast the omnipotent King should He choose to avoid arrest!

But He submitted and this submission only magnified Peter's clumsy and amateurish attempted defense of the situation. Peter was already backslidden in heart and had lost sight of the dignity and glory of his Master at whose summons more than twelve angelic legions would have come. But the command was never given for the Old Testament had marked His pathway down to death, and the Scripture must be completely fulfilled.

The treachery of Judas, the carnality of Peter, and the cowardly flight of all the disciples, including Matthew himself, all sharply contrast with the meekness and patient submission of the Lord Jesus. He alone was poised, calm, dignified and in full command.

THE RELIGIOUS TRIAL (26:57-68)

There were two trials, one religious and one civil. The religious trial charged Jesus with blasphemy; the civil trial charged Him with treason. The religious judge was Caiaphas, the incumbent high priest; the civil judge was Pilate, the Roman governor.

Peter followed his Lord at some distance and then ventured into the palace of the high priest "to see the end." His heart was cold and heavy, and doubtless he felt that all his dreams were about to collapse. We must give Peter some credit for following, especially when all the rest had fled. But what he was about to see and hear was going to lead

to bitter consequences for him.

The trial was a travesty from first to last. It was an illegal trial because it was held at night; it subpoenaed false witnesses; it rendered the verdict the same day as the hearing; and the judge rent his garment (Leviticus 21:10). Our sense of justice is outraged especially when we remember that this was not a pagan court but the highest religious council of the Hebrew people. The sentence had obviously been arrived at before any "evidence" was heard. The hurried search for false witnesses and the flimsy charge based on one twisted and misrepresented statement (compare v. 61 with John 2:18-22) demonstrate the wickedness of the court and its impatience to reach a verdict of guilt. We feel the angry excitement of both judge and witnesses and note the silent Prisoner. Not one word did He utter in self defense. Led as a lamb to the slaughter, He opened not His mouth!

Finally the high priest put Jesus under a judicial oath, binding Him in a most solemn way to speak, and to speak the truth. The rumors and stories about this man's claims to be Messiah must not continue another hour. He must speak—is He or is He not the Messiah, the Son of God? Speaking with solemn dignity under oath, Jesus made a double claim. He is Son of God and He is the Son of Man of Daniel's prophecy —the heir of all "dominion, and glory, and of a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve" (Daniel 7:13, 14). The tone and the magnitude of the claim must have stunned that court. But the awed silence was soon broken by the rending by the high priest of his priestly robe and his explosion of anger. He knew the Old Testament prophecies. He realized Jesus had made enormous claims. His words "Thou hast said" had fully affirmed His claim to be Messiah and God. His "nevertheless" asserted furthermore that He would rise from the dead and ultimately return to earth in triumph.

This was too much! The verdict of guilty was quickly reached. Let us remember as we read the terrible words of verses 67 and 68 that these men were Israel's religious leaders who demanded respect and reverence from all. Actually they were hypocrites who used religion to mask the depravity of their fallen hearts.

Peter must have sat as a silent spectator throughout without uttering a word of protest. Nor was John or Judas far away. Yet not a

word of sympathy was uttered. *Our* senses are often injured and calloused by sin, but *He* had never sinned and His sensibilities were alive and uncalloused. What depth of feeling and indescribable anguish—mental, spiritual and physical—the Lord Jesus must have suffered that night.

In one sense, of course, the Son of God was not on trial here but Caiaphas and the entire nation. The cumulative guilt of Israel was here brought to a climax, and the verdict was one of unqualified guilt.

PETER'S FIERY TRIAL (26:69-75)

The night was almost gone, and Peter, huddled around a fire burning in the courtyard, had temporarily identified himself with the Savior's foes. Suddenly a young girl scrutinized his face in the light of the fire and cried, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth." Startled, Peter evaded pretending he did not understand her, and then moved away from the fire. But another maid saw him and, speaking to the group, she identified "this fellow" Simon as a companion of the Nazarene. Peter denied the charge reinforcing by a solemn oath that he was speaking the truth. The final accusation comes from a whole group of bystanders. They were certain that he was of Jesus' company, for his accent was Galilean, a sure proof that he was a follower of the hated Galilean prophet. This time Peter exploded. Beginning to curse and to swear, he vehemently denied any connection whatever. His protests were terminated by the crowing of a cock in the half light of that ominous morn and instantly Peter recalled words that his Lord had spoken the evening before. Each single word now burned its way into Simon's soul. The tears leaped to his eyes as his heart broke. Withdrawing into the lonely shadows, he wept bitterly.

Peter's real fall of course was much earlier. Its roots had been his pride and self-confidence. The Devil's sifting (Luke 22:31, 32) had been rough but thorough, and had turned up plenty of chaff. But Peter was wheat. The Intercessor's prayer had prevailed. His tears were the first step in his "conversion" or restoration to fellowship and in the end the breaking of Peter proved to be the making of Peter.

When you have mastered this lesson, take the first part of Exam 6 (covering lesson 11), questions 1-10 on pages 12/15-17 (right after lesson 12). Remember, you will not turn this exam in for correction until after you have done lesson 12.

Lesson Twelve

The Death and Resurrection of the King

(MATTHEW 27-28)

THE CIVIL TRIAL (27:1-26)

1. From Caiaphas to Pilate (27:1, 2)

The long night was over and the blackest in human history has dawned. Today man will kill God's Son!

The Sanhedrin, anxious to implement the verdict of the night, now called another meeting to decide the next step. Their executive authority did not permit them to carry out the death penalty; their decision had to be ratified by the Roman Governor. Moreover there was face-saving value in making the Roman authorities the tool of their decision. Should public reaction favor their victim, it would certainly be convenient to turn the responsibility over to the Romans. Hastily, therefore, they bound Jesus and hurried Him off to the residence of the Governor.

2. Judas' "Repentance" and Its Sequel (27:3-10)

Judas had received a tremendous shock at the developments of the past few hours. No doubt he expected the Master to miraculously evade the clutches of His foes, as He had done on other occasions. This would leave the betrayer with some easily gained money in his pocket. This seems to have been his reasoning. But things had gone wrong, and now the coins have become like red hot metal in

his hands. Seized by remorse, Judas rushed back to the priests, flung the coins on the temple floor, shouting, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood."

Was this genuinely saving repentance? If so, then there is hope for him. But it was not; it was merely remorse.

Repentance is self-judgment Godward, while *remorse* is regret over the consequences of sin. Repentance, being a change of both mind and attitude, condemns sinful self, whereas remorse mourns over the wreckage. Peter's tears illustrate repentance; Judas' suicide illustrates remorse. Peter wept to God; Judas confessed only to the priests. "Grief according to God works repentance to salvation, never to be regretted; but the grief of the world works death" (2 Corinthians 7:10, J. N. Darby translation).

Judas did not brokenly seek the face of God for forgiveness. His lament was caused by the unexpected disaster. The plot had failed and now he reproached himself for his part in the spilling of blood he knew to be "innocent." But matters were now completely out of hand. The only response the priests gave was a cold, "What is that to us?" In other words, "We couldn't care less. You made the bargain, didn't you? So now don't come whining to us!" All hope had gone, the wretched Judas rushed on to self-destruction. Reading the end of verse 5 in the light of Acts 1:18, 19, we conclude that the hanging rope must have broken. The horror of what happened gave an unenviable association to that field from then on. Rather than becoming known as "Stranger's Cemetery," as the priests had planned, it became known as "Blood Field."

With contemptible hypocrisy the religionists gathered up the coins and decided that they must honor the law by not placing the tainted money in the temple treasury! Instead they would purge the taint by devoting the money to charity. They would buy a field and use it as a cemetery for strangers.

3. **Pilate Presents a Choice** (27:11-18)

The Lord now faced the Gentile world in the person of the Roman procurator. In answer to the question "Art thou the King of the

Jews?" Jesus gave an unequivocal answer: "I am." It was the strongest of affirmations. Behind Pilate's question lay the fact that the conspirators, knowing a *religious* charge would carry no weight whatever with Pilate, had concocted a *political* charge. Such a charge would compel Pilate's interest so they had accused Jesus of treason against Caesar by His claim to be a king (Luke 23:2).

Just as our Lord solemnly claimed to be Messiah and Son of God before the Jewish Council, so He claimed to be King of the Jews before Pilate the Gentile.

Neither the clamor of the Jewish accusers nor the prodding of the judge could awaken any word of self defense from the Lord Jesus. He remained silent. The governor looked at Him in astonished wonder. Never had he seen a prisoner remain so calm and dignified under such provocation. What should he do? Then the idea came. This was Passover and it was an annual custom to liberate any prisoner the people chose. At this very moment a notorious seditionist was being held. Jesus was also being charged with the same crime of sedition so Pilate decided to put the two men up for choice. He hoped they would release Jesus and thus extricate him from the horns of a dilemma. In his heart Pilate knew that the underlying motive of the Jews was envy.

4. The Crowd's Choice (27:19-26)

There was a brief intermission at this point, during which Pilate held a short interview with the Prisoner within the privacy of the palace (John 18:33-38). Outside the mob debated the question of the choice. Returning to the judgment seat, the judge now received a warning note from his wife: he must acquit the accused at once, for He is a righteous man. Pilate must not condemn the innocent. The warning had come through a remarkable dream within the past few hours, and the matter was urgent. But Pilate paid no heed. Any inward wrestlings were submerged in the clamor surrounding him, for the crowd has now reached a decision. Goaded on by the priests, the crowds roar their choice of

Barabbas. Jesus must go to the cross! Pilate's evasions, vacillations, counter proposals and hand-washing were of no avail. He yielded to the pressure, ordered a flogging for the Savior, and signed the order for His execution by crucifixion.

"His blood be on us and our children," was the blood curdling cry of Israel that day. And we know that ever since that awful hour their history has been written in the red ink of their own blood.

CALVARY (27:27-56)

1. The Human Side of Christ's Sufferings (27:27-44)

Our Lord's sufferings were twofold—he suffered from the hand of man and from the hand of God. The former were physical; the latter spiritual. The former were for righteousness' sake; the latter were vicarious and atoning. The former manifest the hatred of man; the latter the love of God.

The brutalities of the Roman soldiers call for little exposition. They bullied their victim. They made of Him a mock king with royal robe, crown, sceptre, title and "subjects." Their unholy mockery has now been answered by God who has exalted His Son to the highest place in heaven. What man gave Him in derision will be His in reality when He returns to earth to reign.

The crown of thorns was significant in the light of Genesis 3:18. Thorns were the fruit of the curse caused by man's sin. They are now linked with the penalty to be paid by the Substitute who will bear the curse of God in the sinner's stead.

The tradition that Jesus collapsed while bearing His cross to Golgotha is probably correct. It explains why Simon, the North African, was recruited by the soldiers to carry the cross after the Savior. What an honor was his that day! Possibly he was a sympathetic disciple whom the soldiers wanted to humiliate. Possibly he was the father of Rufus, mentioned in Romans 16:13 (see also Mark 15:21).

Having arrived at Golgotha, the execution party sought to prepare Jesus for the ordeal ahead by offering a stupefying drink, a potion designed to dull the pain. The Lord refused this although later He did drink vinegar (John 19:28-30). Thus was fulfilled Psalm 69:21 which called for gall for His meat and vinegar for His drink. The first movement of this was fulfilled at the beginning of the crucifixion and the second at the close.

Golgotha was outside the city. The meaning of the word is worth noting. Golgotha (i.e. "Calvary") means "skull," and the site has been traditionally associated with the spot where David buried the head of Goliath (1 Samuel 17:54). It had probably been the place of Jewish execution for centuries, and was well known to all. How significant that the Lord of Glory, the wiser than Solomon, should die at the spot which declares the emptiness of all human wisdom, "the place of a *skull.*"

A thousand years earlier Psalm 22:18 had foretold the dividing of His clothes and the gambling for His vesture, or tunic. The pagan soldiers now unwittingly fulfilled this, literally "parting," or dividing, and "casting lots." John fills out the exact details (John 19:23, 24).

It was customary for the criminal's accusation to be advertised by nailing a placard over his head so that all could read it. Matthew wants us to notice the wording to impress upon us that Jesus died as King. The words were written by Pilate as a contemptuous thrust at Jewry but they are true. He *is* King, and God will see to it that He will reign as such on His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2).

Doubtless the crucifying of a robber on each side was intended to further discredit the condemned one. But once again these hardened men were unconsciously fulfilling Isaiah 53:12, "He was numbered with the transgressors." Psalm 22:7, 8 was also fulfilled in the heartless taunts that were hurled at the dying Jesus (vv. 39-44). This calloused attitude–indeed, almost the exact words–were predicted. What a great cluster of Old Testament prophecies were precisely fulfilled within the compass of those climactic twenty-four hours!

2. The Divine Side of Christ's Sufferings (27:45-50)

The Lord hung on the cross from the third hour—9 A.M.—until the ninth, or about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Half of this period was in the bright sunlight, and the other half in deep darkness. These physical changes reflected the spiritual significance of His agony, and also distinguished between His sufferings at the hand of man and what He endured at the hand of God.

The seven cries of the Lord Jesus are divided into three groups. Three were uttered in the light and three just before the end. One, the cry of desertion, occurred "about the ninth hour"—the first since the darkness descended at noon. During these terrible three hours our Lord agonized in silence. Not a word broke the ominous quietness. Something dreadful was happening. His holy soul was "made sin for us." The all-righteous God dealt with Him in unrelieved condemnation, meting out to Him all that the penalty for sin demanded. It was here that true atonement was made, and *only* here. No suffering from *human* hands could effect this. Sin is an affront to an infinite God and is therefore an infinite offense demanding infinite punishment. Only One who was Himself infinite could bear this and only the Infinite Himself could inflict it. The outward darkness was merely illustrated on the physical level the inward darkness that seized the soul of the Savior as He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). Psalm 22:1 was fulfilled in the awful cry of abandonment, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" As E. W. Rogers says, "The mystery of the three dark hours and that which took place therein will never be fully known to any but 'Thou' and 'Me.' It was the mystery of a thrice holy God forsaking His equally holy Son."

The actual words "Eli, Eli" were Aramaic and were not understood by some of the bystanders. The supernatural darkness, the mystifying circumstances, the fact that the prophets had predicted the return of Elijah about the time of Messiah's appearing all caused the crowd to conclude that Elijah himself might immediately appear. One person, moved by pity, ministered the vinegar,

and by so doing fulfilled Psalm 69:21 (John 19:28-30).

But now the work was finished, and the full penalty paid. Nothing more remained for God's justice was fully met. The Sufferer's last loud cry and the way He yielded up His spirit demonstrated that even in death He was still a King.

3. The Beginning of the Glorious Harvest (27:51-56)

The grain of heavenly Wheat, having fallen into the ground and died, had already begun to bring forth fruit. The first result that Matthew records was the rending of the temple veil. The tear began at the top and not the bottom. For centuries this veil had separated the two rooms of Israel's tabernacle. Only the high priest had access beyond that veil and then only once a year when he took with him the blood of the sin offering. A holy God was within; sinful man was without. But now complete propitiation for sin had been effected and the veil was rent by God's own hand. The way into the holiest was opened for all who will approach by the precious blood of Christ (Exodus 26:31-34; Leviticus 16; Hebrews 9:1-8; 10:19-22).

The earthquake followed almost as though anticipating that future day when the Lord will return and "shake terribly the earth," removing the old order and making all things new. This earthquake evidently opened many graves, from which, after Christ's resurrection, many believers arose bodily and appeared to their friends in the city of Jerusalem. If we believe in *His* resurrection it is not difficult to believe about theirs! The Lord Jesus arose as "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). All saints will one day arise because of this. Furthermore we may conclude that there will be recognition and social renewal in glory.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record the confession of the Gentile centurion but only Matthew includes "them that were with him." They all were affrighted by the strange events, and they all joined in the acknowledgment that this man was the Son of God. How startling to hear this confession of faith from Gentile lips amidst such Jewish unbelief! Matthew also mentions those

loyal and devoted women who, many months earlier, had ministered unto Him of their substance (Luke 8:2, 3). They stand by Jesus despite criticism and danger, transfixed by intense love and risking their very lives for One whom they have known as Messiah, Savior and Lord.

THE KING'S BURIAL (27:57-66)

1. Joseph of Arimathaea (27:57-61)

Seven hundred years earlier Isaiah had prophesied that although men would appoint Messiah's grave with the wicked, He would be with the rich in His death (Isaiah 53:9, A.S.V.). This prophecy was now made good and God's Son who had been treated like a criminal must now have the burial of a king. Joseph, originally of Arimathaea, was not only wealthy but he was an honorable member of the Sanhedrin, and, best of all, a believer on the Lord Jesus. The death of the Savior had brought a crisis into his life, and he now declared his loyalty by requesting of the Governor the body of Jesus. Joseph must have moved in high circles to know Pilate thus. Also he must have realized the opprobrium that such a request would bring to himself. His stand for the Lord had its price. The removal of that battered and blood-stained body, the "clean linen cloth," the private "new tomb," the "great stone," and the vigilant women are all details that awaken our admiration.

After His side had been pierced, not one unsanctified hand was laid upon Jesus. His enemies had done their worst, but now it was over and the King's body must be attended only by His friends. A full and complete burial was necessary in view of the impending miracle of His resurrection. There must be no room for doubt that He had really died.

2. The Insecurity of the Security Council (27:62-66)

It is startling to notice that the foes of Christ remembered a

pronouncement of His that His own disciples had missed. He said He would rise again from the grave after three days! Afraid that the disciples might spring a hoax, they sought Pilate's permission to secure the grave. They were obviously giving the disciples a lot more credit for courage than they deserved. Apart from John, they were nowhere to be found at Calvary. These priests imagined that within three days these timid men would generate sufficient boldness to rifle the grave and then sweep Jerusalem with the story that their master had arisen—a story that would bring down upon the heads of the religious leaders the collective wrath of the people.

Pilate complied with their request. "Ye have a watch," he said. Some have concluded that Pilate provided a Roman guard, but the suggestion is that they were to use their own Jewish temple guard. In addition to this the stone was sealed with the imperial seal, making it a criminal offense to tamper with the tomb.

Ironically, all of these security measures would soon provide the most convincing evidence that the disciples could not have been guilty of trickery, and that the Lord Jesus Christ had actually risen again from the dead!

THE RESURRECTED LORD (28:1-20)

1. The Angel Brings Joyous News (28:1-8)

"Weeping may endure for a night," wrote the Psalmist, "but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5). The long night of weeping was over and the joyous morn has dawned. The groans of the garden and Golgotha are past, and the songs of victory are heard.

It would not have been surprising had the risen Christ confronted Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate that Easter Sunday and overwhelmed them with terror and judgment. But that is left for a future time. Now He would visit His precious loved ones. And in this connection it is noteworthy that after His resurrection Christ

never appeared to the ungodly. It was only to "witnesses chosen before of God" that He made Himself manifest, and with whom He did "eat and drink" (Acts 10:41).

During the forty days between His resurrection and ascension the Lord Jesus made many appearances, but Matthew, keeping the King and the kingdom in mind, confines himself to two—to the women, and afterward to the eleven.

The Sabbath, such an integral part of Judaism and the law, was ended. During its hours the Son of God had lain dead. There was no life, no stirring in His tomb. But now what a change! The sun has set, the dusk of the old day has become the dawn of the new. Two eager Marys hurried to the grave bearing spices they had prepared to embalm the body. The hasty burial following the Savior's death had prevented this ministry,* but now they came to do their loving deed. Some commentators feel that they made a preliminary inspection in the evening and returned next morning to complete their work, and between the two trips the episode of the earthquake and the removal of the stone by the angel took place. At any rate, these devoted women were on hand in the morning, witnessed the terrified and immobilized guard, consisting of perhaps some sixty soldiers, and heard the word of assurance that their Lord was already risen.

Indeed Christ had arisen that first day of the week before any of these events had occurred. His glorified body, so wondrous, mysterious but real, had passed right through the cerements of death and out of that sepulchre before the angel had touched the stone. "It was not possible that he should be holden" of death (Acts 2:24). No power in earth or hell could detain Him. He was raised by the glory of the Father (Romans 6:4), by Himself as the Son (John 2:19-21; 10:17, 18) and He was quickened (or made alive) by the Spirit (1 Peter 3:18). The whole Trinity was at work in mighty power that momentous morning. The angel rolled away the stone to let the women and others see that He had already

*Compare John 19:39, 40. Probably the ministries of Joseph and Nicodemus occupied most of the time between 3 P.M. and sun-down, leaving the women no time for *their* devoted act.

been raised. And note that in the aftermath of the resurrection, when the apostles boldly proclaimed this doctrine, the unbelieving priests never once challenged its *veracity*. They raged against its proclamation but they never denied its truth.

Dealing tenderly with the affrighted women, the mighty angel calmed their fears, assured them he knew their mission, and invited them to inspect the empty tomb. They were to "come see" and then "go tell." We can never "tell" unless we first "see"! But having seen we must go, and go "quickly." Earlier the Lord had promised to meet His own in Galilee when He would once again "go before" them (26:32). So now the angel confirmed the appointment. Filled with trembling fear and yet great joy, this pair ran to spread the electrifying news to the sorrowing disciples.

2. A Greeting from the Risen Lord (28:9, 10)

"As they went . . . Jesus met them." Obedience always brings blessing, and what a reward these women received that morning! And what a greeting from His lips. "All hail" simply means "Rejoice," and this is among His first recorded words after He came back from death. What a contrast to His lament in Gethsemane and to His agonized cry on the cross. He would now have them and us share His own deep joy. No wonder they worshiped Him. Seeing His face and hearing His voice must always lead to homage at His feet. But worship leads to testimony so they must go and tell His brethren that they too will see Him, but in Galilee.

Why Galilee? Why not Jerusalem? Because Jerusalem, the very heart of Judaism, had rejected Him, and Galilee was Gentile country. Henceforth His message and His kingdom would embrace the Gentile in its sweep of blessing. What a significant place then for the meeting with the disciples and the giving of the Great Commission.

3. The Bribe (28:11-15)

For soldiers to sleep on duty is a court-martial offense. But these

soldiers did not fall asleep. They had been paralyzed with fright and rendered helpless, so that it was only "some" of them that were in fit condition to report the whole story to their superiors later that morning. This disconcerting news, precipitated a hurried meeting of the Sanhedrin but brought no motion to investigate the astonishing report. Instead the bigots launched a counter attack of determined denial. But how could they silence the tongues of the men who had experienced the strange event? Well, every man has his price, even in those far away times. So the story was invented, rehearsed and memorized. And the careful rehearsal was accompanied by the sound of tinkling coins, many coins, plenty of money! And the story? "While we slept the disciples stole the body!" How could these men know what was happening while they were all asleep? No wonder it took "large money" to keep that story afloat! But by the time Matthew wrote this Gospel the report had been widely circulated and given credence.

4. The Communion and the Commission (28:16-20)

In harmony with his theme, Matthew leaves the King on earth, omitting entirely the fact of the ascension. He closed his royal Gospel with a final majestic view of Christ as Center of the worshipers and Commander of the witnesses.

The words here are full of significance. They have stirred the heart of the Christian Church ever since and have sent countless missionary witnesses to earth's remotest corners with the Good News of salvation.

The place of this meeting was in a mountain in Galilee. The mountain, dominating as it does the surrounding terrain, suggests a kingdom, in the symbolism of Scripture. The King's message is to embrace a kingdom of regenerated Gentiles. Communion however comes before service, and so these men gathered around their Lord to look into His face and worship Him. This Gospel both begins and ends with a worshiping company (2:11). The importance of this holy exercise cannot be exaggerated for unless the servant takes time to look often into Christ's face and to adore

Him, his service will deteriorate into a cold, mechanical performance devoid of spiritual power.

Now followed the greatest of claims and the greatest of commissions. No potentate can make the claim made by our Lord when He declared that all authority in heaven and on earth was His. He has not yet asserted this universal authority, but some day soon He will. And then all beings, celestial and terrestrial, will bow beneath His sceptre, and a redeemed universe will sing His praise. In the meantime He set forth a program and a promise. The program is a threefold one for each Christian witness to obey. It puts us into motion with its "Go ye therefore." The "therefore" is important, for it links our going with His authority and means that we go with His full backing and power.

We are to teach, that is, "make disciples" of all the nations (A.S.V.). The commission of chapter 10 was restricted to Israel; *this* one is all-inclusive. Disciples are made by preaching the Gospel, as the A.S.V. of Acts 14:21 makes clear. Then these are to be baptized in the name (not names) of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, this being the full revelation of the Trinity as revealed in Christianity. This baptism is distinct from John's, and is the initiatory rite of the Christian profession. It is closely associated with the Gospel but is also distinct from it. Otherwise Paul could never have written, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel . . . lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (1 Corinthians 1:17). Professed believers, therefore, should be baptized promptly following their profession of faith in the Savior.*

Finally, such must be instructed to obey every precept the Lord Jesus gave to His disciples, especially during those forty days that He spent in their midst before His ascension (Acts 1:1-3). His will must be supreme, and His commands obeyed by all the subjects of His kingdom.

The unqualified promise of His abiding presence concludes

---

*We recommend the Emmaus course *Buried by Baptism* by William MacDonald which carefully examines every New Testament reference to the subject.

the Commission. The "all power," the "all nations," and the "all things" are reinforced by the final "always" of His presence even to the consummation of the age.

The final "Amen," though lacking in the Greek text, is however most appropriate for each of us who emerge from this study with hearts aglow with fresh love for and obedience to God's glorious King.

When you are ready, complete Exam 6 by answering questions 11-20 on pages 12/17-19. (You should have already answered questions 1-10 as part of your study of lesson 11.)

When you have answered all the questions in Exam 6, mail the exam for correction.

Name _____ (print plainly) Exam Grade _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Class Number _____

Instructor _____

LESSON 11

In the blank space in the right-hand margin write the letter of the correct answer.

1. The Lord concluded His great prophetic discourse with the announcement that He was soon
a. to return to Nazareth
b. to be crucified
c. to establish His kingdom
d. to begin the Church age _____

2. The plot to do away with the Lord Jesus was to avoid any confrontation on "the feast day" because
a. everyone would be pre-occupied with the festivities
b. too many Roman soldiers would be around on that day
c. the Roman governor would be in residence for the feast
d. with passions running high an attempt upon the Lord at such a time might instigate a riot _____

3. The true significance of Mary's act in anointing the Lord's feet relates to the Lord's
a. virgin birth
b. holy life
c. immaculate walk
d. atoning death
e. forthcoming burial
f. anticipated resurrection _____

4. The Lord Jesus instituted a new ordinance at the last Passover. This ordinance was that of
   a. Christian baptism
   b. footwashing
   c. the Lord's Supper
   d. extreme unction

5. The upper room ministry concluded with
   a. a special prayer meeting
   b. singing from the psalms
   c. an evangelistic message
   d. a prophetic discourse

6. Which of the three disciples managed to stay awake in Gethsemane to watch and pray with the Lord?
   a. Peter
   b. James
   c. John
   d. all the above
   e. none of the above

7. In Gethsemane the Lord prayed
   a. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"
   b. "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, but not my will but Thine be done"
   c. "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit"
   d. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"

8. Jesus was charged with treason before
   a. Caiaphas
   b. Ananias
   c. Pilate
   d. Herod

9. The Lord owned Himself to be God when
   a. Caiaphas put Him under oath
   b. the false witnesses testified against Him
   c. Pilate threatened to crucify Him
   d. Herod mocked Him

10. Peter cursed when
   a. he saw Judas betray Christ
   b. he saw his efforts to defend Christ with his sword were unsuccessful
   c. he was challenged by the group around the fire with being a follower of Jesus
   d. he heard the mob choose Barabbas _____

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Have you given the Lord Jesus a fair trial?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

LESSON 12

In the blank space in the right-hand margin write the letter of the correct answer.

11. The Sanhedrin turned Christ over to Pilate because
   a. they were loyal and devoted Roman citizens
   b. only Pilate could sign a death sentence
   c. they had a secret agreement with Pilate to do so
   d. Herod advised them to _____

12. Judas was
   a. full of remorse for what he had done
   b. truly repentant for his sin
   c. given absolution by the priests for his sin
   d. unable to obtain Christ's forgiveness so he hanged himself _____

13. The thing which astonished Pilate about the Lord was
a. His bravery
b. His silence
c. His wisdom
d. His power _____

14. What is so significant about the crown of thorns?
a. Its size
b. It symbolized the curse
c. It was prophetically described by David in the psalms
d. It withered the moment it touched the Lord's brow _____

15. Which of the following incidents, connected with Calvary, was not a subject of direct Old Testament prophecy? The
a. nailing of the accusation to the cross
b. dividing of Christ's clothes
c. gambling for Christ's tunic
d. associating of criminals with Christ _____

16. Christ made atonement for our sin
a. all the time He was on the cross
b. only during the three hours of darkness
c. at the moment of His actual death only
d. when He said "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do" _____

17. Which of the following at Calvary confessed Christ to be the Son of God?
a. Simon Peter
b. the Roman centurian
c. Joseph of Arimathaea
d. Pilate _____

18. Of the many appearances the Lord made after His resurrection, Matthew records
a. two
b. five
c. ten
d. twelve _____

19. The Lord Jesus rose from the dead
a. on the Sabbath day
b. on the anniversary of the founding of the Temple
c. on the first day of the week
d. on Good Friday _____

20. Matthew's Gospel concludes with
a. the ascension of the Lord
b. the Great Commission
c. the Lord Jesus ministering in heaven as our Great High Priest
d. the birth of the Church at Pentecost _____

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

1. You have studied the story of Jesus. Please assess your relationship to Him by checking the following "Yes" or "No."

a. I believe the record of Jesus as given by Matthew is true. _____

b. I believe Jesus is the Son of God. _____

c. I believe He died for me on Calvary's cross. _____

d. I have accepted Him as my own personal Savior. _____

e. I own Him as Lord of my life. _____

2. What has blessed you most in your study of this Gospel?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

MAIL TO address shown on back outside cover.
PLEASE enclose a stamped addressed envelope for the return of your corrected exam.

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES

Take the
Emmaus road
to Bible knowledge

EMMAUS CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL
2570 ASBURY ROAD
DUBUQUE, IA 52001-3099

ISBN 0-940293-02-1